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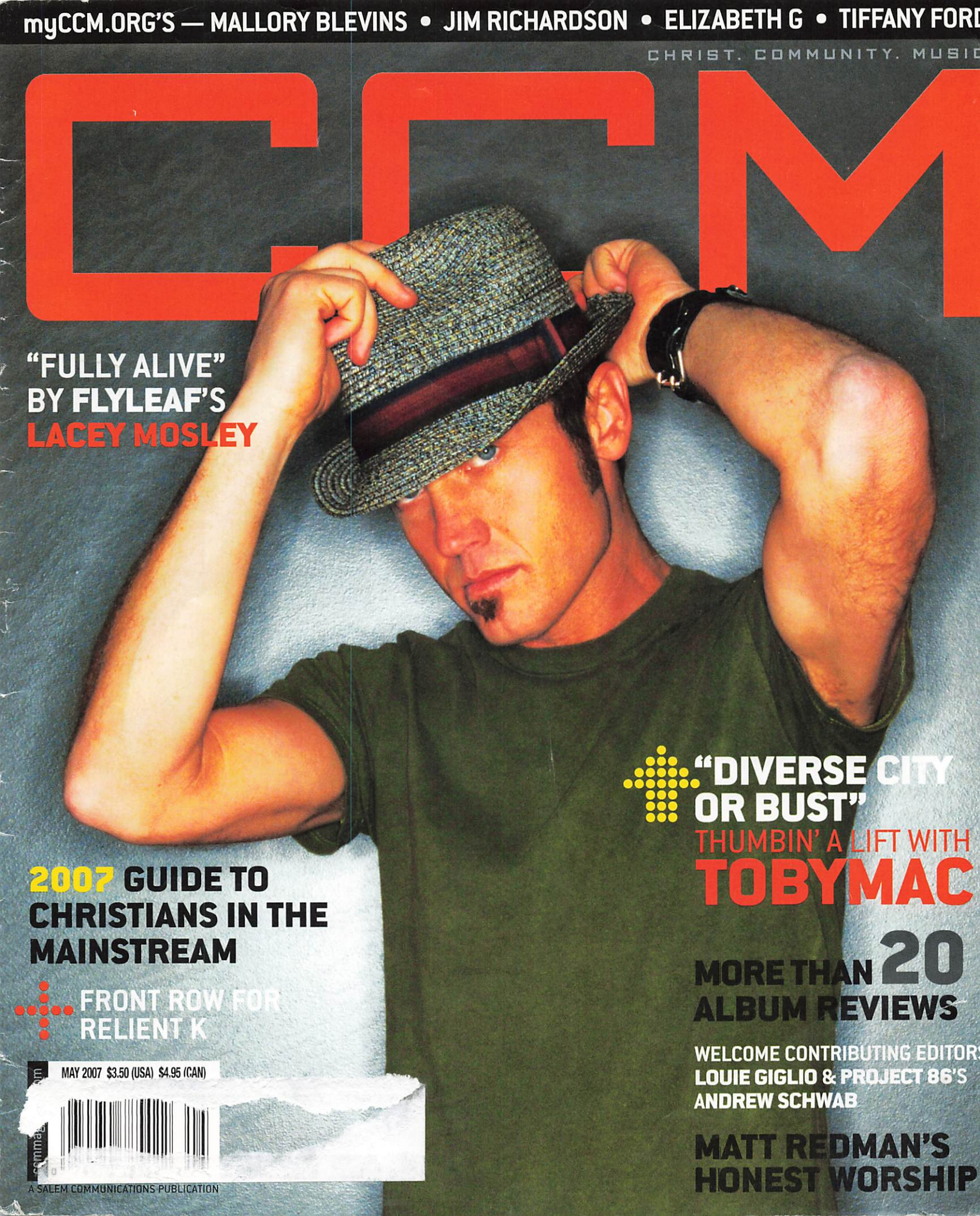

"FULLY ALIVE" BY FLYLEAF'S LACEY MOSLEY

"DIVERSE CITY OR BUST" THUMBIN' A LIFT WITH TOBYMAC

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FRONT ROW FOR RELIENT K

MORE THAN 20 ALBUM REVIEWS

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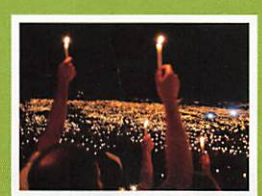

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SEEING IS BELIEVING

Fellow music fans, I am honored to welcome you into a new era for *CCM Magazine*. With this month's issue, we're inviting you to experience our magazine in unprecedented, exciting ways.

Back in 1998, our founder, John Styll, described *CCM* as "a music magazine for active Christians who seek entertainment, community and inspiration as well as perspective on issues of faith and culture." I'm pleased to say his articulate description remains very true of our magazine today. However, thanks to advances in technology (especially with regards to the Internet) and emerging trends among artists of faith and the music they create, we've been exploring new ways for *CCM* to honor that mission. We even went so far as to ask an extremely symbolic question: *Is it time to change the name of our magazine?*

As you can see, we remain quite partial to the acronym. Of course, longtime readers know the abbreviation was born out of different titles in our magazine's history, including *Contemporary Christian Music* and *Contemporary Christian Magazine*. Since the '90s, *CCM* has embraced a more ambiguous approach to the acronym, especially as the label "contemporary Christian music" became increasingly dated and marginalizing for artists of faith.

Today, we're honored to bring clarity and new meaning to our magazine's name—new meaning that we believe highlights our defining priorities with *CCM*. From now on, in addition to our logo, you'll see this tagline on our front cover: **Christ • Community • Music**.

I want to say right up front that I'm very aware of the precariousness of including our Lord's Holy Name in any form of marketing (which includes using the term "*Christian* music" by the way). But, if we're going to honestly put our cards on the table, **Christ** is Who this magazine is called to champion and reflect above all others. While we will never come remotely close to doing that perfectly, that is our end all, be all calling. As the Lord Jesus made clear in Matthew 22:37-38, "'*Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.' This is the first and greatest commandment*" (NIV).

And the second greatest commandment? Well, that profoundly informs our decision to include **community** in our top three priorities. As Jesus continues in the very next verse, "*And the second is like it: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.' All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments*" (Matthew 22:39-40, NIV).

Yes, relationships. I've said it before, and I'll say it again…there are two things this magazine should primarily be about: music and relationships—relationships with Christ and relationships with other people. Community. As John Styll's defining statement from 1998 points out, community has long been a point of emphasis for *CCM*. Since its inception, the magazine has played a key role in nurturing a sense of community between artists and fans, among artists themselves and, perhaps more than anything, among fans around the world…all the while raising awareness about each believer's responsibility to be in community locally and globally.

Beginning with this month's issue of *CCM*, we're upping the stakes with how we go about fostering community among our readers (both artists and fans). For starters, you—the readers—are helping us literally create this magazine. As you read this month's issue, you'll discover many pages where you have the opportunity to join in the dialogue, to let your voice be heard like never before—especially if you're a member of our new **myCCM.org** social networking community, which has already welcomed more than 5,000 fans and artists to its ranks. In addition to seeing your conversational opinions given new platforms, readers will have the opportunity to contribute album reviews, ask artists questions and more. From now on, our music journalists will team up with you to put this magazine together. (*That's why some of your names appear on this month's cover.*)

And **music**? It has been and will continue to be the glue that connects everything this magazine is about. That said, you'll quickly discover our approach is more inclusive than ever with regards to independent artists and mainstream artists of faith. We're going to start mixing indie and general market Christians in with those who have Christian label affiliation on a more regular basis. In other words, we're going to stop perpetuating the myth that what is and is not "Christian music" is based on where the music is sold. (If you think that last sentence sounded confessional, you're right.)

After you've had a chance to dive into this month's issue, write me at **Jay@CCMmagazine.com**, and let me know what you think we got right and what you think we can do better. Your opinions have, and always will have, a shaping influence on the direction of this magazine—now more so than ever.

Jay Swartzendruber
myCCM.org/Jay

CCM MAGAZINE

Christ • Community • Music
volume 29 issue 11

Exploring redemptive music and the culture it influences.

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> "...RELIENT K'S MUSIC REACHES OUT AND REMINDS ME THAT THERE ARE ISSUES, CONCERNS, BELIEFS AND PROMISES THAT UNITE US. WHILE SOME RK MUSIC IS JUST FUN, MANY OF THEIR NEWER TUNES ARE CONTEMPLATIVE PIECES THAT APPEAL TO BOTH TEENS AND ADULTS; THOSE TUNES MAKE ME THINK AND HAVE HELPED ME BECOME A BETTER PERSON." ***Christopher Tracy**, Kenmore, WA*

RIGHT ON

Thank you so much for the in-depth article on my favorite group, Relient K, in the March issue ["Something So Right"]. I cannot overemphasize how great of an impact that band has had on my life. It all happened when I was 14 years old and had no passion for living the faith. By some strange coincidence, I came by their single, "I So Hate Consequences." Out of all the songs I have ever heard, none has moved me closer to God than that one. And ever since that day, I've been living for Christ as best I can. If it wasn't for Relient K, who knows where I might have ended up. I highly recommend their new album—every song is great on it. To Dr. Tony Shore, who reviewed the album in the same issue, *Five Score and Seven Years Ago* deserved an "A+" (not an "A-"). Thanks again; I always look forward to receiving my copy of *CCM* each month.

***Zeb Adams**, Lufkin,TX*

I enjoyed the Relient K cover story and your editor's commentary ["How Relient K Won By Surrendering"]. For me, though, their music goes well beyond what was noted. I'm not a teenager. I'm a mainline Christian, not fundamentalist or "born again." Some non-music programs on Christian radio stations that are produced by the "Christian heavy-hitters" are a bit out-of-sync with my beliefs or off-putting and relentlessly obsessed with a couple of social issues. But Relient K's music reaches out and reminds me that there are issues, concerns, beliefs and promises that unite us. While some RK music is just fun, many of their newer tunes are contemplative pieces that appeal to both teens and adults; those tunes make me think and have helped me become a better person.

***Christopher Tracy**, Kenmore, WA*

I want to thank you for the completely awesome review of *Five Score and Seven Years Ago* by Relient K. I'd become a fan of theirs during the fall, and when I saw that they were coming out with a new CD, I was really psyched! Then your March issue came, and who's on the cover? Relient K! (The article, "Something So Right," was great.) I read your album review and went out and bought the CD the same day! *Five Score and Seven Years Ago* really inspires me, and I think [front man] Matt Thiessen did a great job on songwriting. All in all, it's really fun to listen to. Thanks for keeping me up to date on all the best artists!

***Alysson Haag**, Ballston Spa, NY*

WRONG-O

I completely, utterly disagree with what you said about Anberlin's new CD. I believe it was one Andrew Scates who wrote the review ["InReview Music," March], saying, and I quote, "If the grandeur of 'Fin' could be captured earlier throughout the album, it might be what *Cities* needs to not just be a good album, but to be a great album." That, my friends, is EXTREMELY wrong. It already is a great album, and this man needs to be told what a great album sounds like. dcTalk. Skillet. Audio Adrenaline. Great albums have always been ridiculed at first by the likes of this critic. I have to say that this is the worst review of an album I have EVER read, and not just in your magazine.

I respect the fact that this so-called "critic" is entitled to his opinion, but libeling this AMAZING work of art in the form of music like that is completely inappropriate for a Christian magazine. I hope that this man will be, at the very least, allowed to read my comment.

Every person I have talked to who has read this issue of *CCM* has had the same reaction as I have. I've gotten things back like, "That was completely rude and disrespectful!" and some things that I won't write here. I don't want to be rude like this writer was. My gratitude goes out to you for reading my comments, and please do not let them go unheeded.

***Hannah Rowton**, via email*

Hannah, we hear you loud and clear. Andrew Scates hears you loud and clear. We can only imagine what you would have thought if he hadn't liked the album. (He did, after all, grade it a "B.")

Anberlin

The Wedding

> "I CAN TELL THE WEDDING'S NEW ALBUM, *POLARITY*, WILL CHALLENGE ITS LISTENERS IN THEIR FAITH WITH ITS EDGY ROCK SOUND AND STELLAR LYRICS."
> ***Jessica Tack**, Hummelstown, PA*

REVIEWS CAN BE YOUR FRIEND

This is in reaction to some of the letters about the reviews in *CCM*. It is my humble opinion that it does make sense for your magazine to review and then rate the music because this music is a form of entertainment that is paid for. Music is ultimately a product, and consumers want to know opinions and summaries of products to help them form their own conclusion of whether or not to purchase it.

I understand that we shouldn't be going into churches and rating worship bands there, but when they choose to record the music on a CD and put it on sale, it becomes a product, even if it isn't a product in the context of being performed live or within a church. Something that I would like to see though, is multiple short reviews done by three different people for each CD, this way there'd be second and third opinions and more variety.

***Sean Duncan**, Puyallup, WA*

Good stuff to think about there, Sean. Thank you. With regards to our album reviews section, you'll notice that it's changed quite a bit with our new redesign this month. In addition to making the reviews shorter (so we can feature a lot more albums), we're adding a special section called "Buzz Factor." There you'll find a second opinion on many of the albums you first read about in CCM. And get this—those opinions are coming from CCM readers. See Page 58 to check it out.

A PROPOSAL

I've been disappointed to not see any recent coverage about Brave New World's artist The Wedding. Their sophomore album [came] out on April 17, and I know they aren't a huge band, but their hearts can't get much bigger. I can tell their new album, *Polarity*, will challenge its listeners in their faith with its edgy rock sound and stellar lyrics. I'd like to see *CCM* support some smaller bands that still have a huge heart for the Lord.

***Jessica Tack**, Hummelstown, PA*

Your wish is our command, Jessica. See page 57 for our review of The Wedding's Polarity. By the way, you'll find The Wedding is actually quite a "huge band" compared to many of the talented independent acts whose albums we're reviewing nowadays. And speaking of indie artists, be sure to check out our story on the exceptional Candi Pearson-Shelton on Page 42 while you're at it.

ST. JAMES, G1C & ME

At 13, I try to listen to as much music as possible. I started buying *CCM Magazine* in December, and I was overjoyed to see a full-page painting of Rebecca St. James for "Best Female Artist" back in January's issue. I think she deserved it big time. (The artist who did the painting is amazing for the detail.) I like the fact that Rebecca reaches to both genders and not just female. As you can probably tell, I'm a big fan of hers. I also admire Hawk Nelson, Krystal Meyers and now, thanks to *CCM*, Group 1 Crew. As soon as I read the review of their self-titled debut in your March issue ["InReview Music"], I went out and listened to them and was really impressed. Thanks for this great magazine!

***Mitchell Danser**,*
Lacombe, Alberta, Canada

FANARAZZI

WHEN ARTISTS GET TO MEET *YOU*

[**Tessa Russell**, Hollidaysburg, PA & **STELLAR KART**]

My boyfriend, Andrew Robley, and I recently went to the newsboys' "*Go* Tour," featuring Stellar Kart and Kutless, twice in a span of one week! It was absolutely amazing, every part of it! After the concert was over, Stellar Kart and Kutless signed autographs and took pictures. Here we are pictured with Stellar Kart, one of our faves! If they are going to be near you, get out and see them! It's worth every penny!

myCCM.org/tesssbabeee

[**Aimee Wendt**, Racine, WI & **HAWK NELSON**]

Here's a picture of Hawk Nelson's Jason Dunn and me during their most recent tour stop in Kankakee, Illinois. I was volunteering at the show, and had a chance to hang out with the crew people and some of the artists before the concert. When Hawk Nelson per-formed, Jason invited me to come on stage with him and do their song "Hello," along with the band. It was one of the most incredible three minutes of my life!

myCCM.org/hawkrox

*Have you recently taken a picture with one of your favorite artists at a concert, in-store appearance, church event, or, hey, at the flea market? If so, send us the photo and tell us who you met, where you met 'em, and what it was like. Email the photo and info to **Feedback@CCMmagazine.com** or use CCM's regular mailing address below (Attn: Feedback).*

WRITE US!

We welcome your comments. Email: feedback@CCMmagazine.com or address your letter to: Feedback, *CCM Magazine*, 104 Woodmont Blvd., Suite 300, Nashville, TN 37205; fax 615/385-4112, Attn: Feedback. Always include your full name, address and phone number. Letters may be edited for length and clarity.

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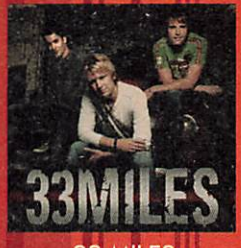
MICHAEL W. SMITH
Stand

THIRD DAY
Chronology Vol. 1

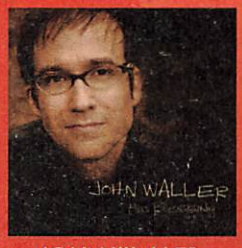
VARIOUS ARTISTS
Glory Revealed

THE NEXT BIG THING



33 MILES
33 Miles

ECHOING ANGELS
You Alone



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The Blessing

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ORGANIZED BEYOND RECOGNITION

Two years since its debut, Tooth & Nail Record's act THE CHARIOT continues to make a name for itself—despite its ties to hardcore royalty, Norma Jean.

When a member of a rock band steps away from that outfit for something new, he or she is often scrutinized and held in comparison to the former group. This is especially true if your former group is the ever-popular Norma Jean. But when Josh Scogin

>>

came roaring back to the music scene with The Chariot's 2005 debut album, *Everything is Alive, Everything is Breathing, Nothing is Dead and Nothing is Bleeding* (Tooth & Nail), any limiting associations with NJ were pretty much blown out of the way with the fiery rhythm attack and Scogin's scorching screams when they played show after show to support it. Each audience his new band played to seemed to embrace The Chariot as a wonderful, albeit hard-as-nails, entity all its own.

If that sonic assault wasn't enough, the band's sophomore outing, titled *The Fiancee*, will finish the job. It's as heavy as stink, starting off with as much noise as they can make, then initiating strategic strikes to the head with point-counterpoint guitar blips and deadly body blows with a crushing rhythm section pummeling away as one.

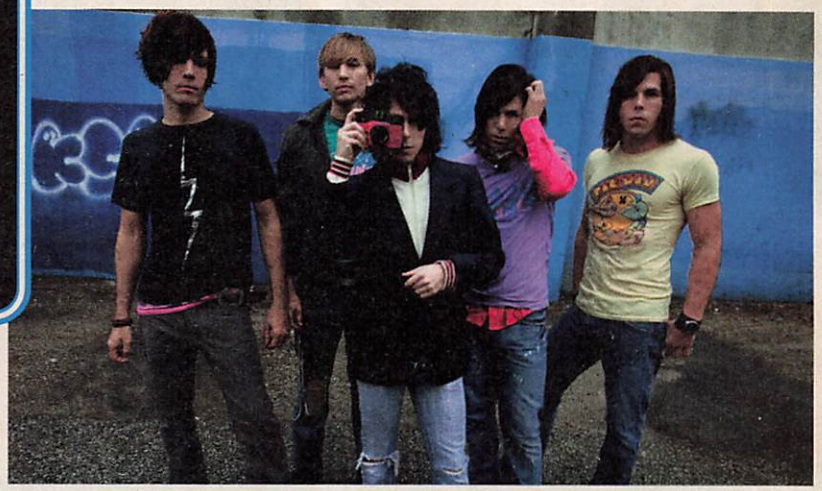
"We did not really plan any changes between *Everything is Alive*...and *The Fiancee*," explains Scogin. "We just sort of go in, give it birth and let the song form its own life." Where his lyric writing is concerned, he doesn't get heavy-handed with his faith, either. "It is a part of who I am, so, of course, it is going to come through in the art I do. I don't try to force it upon people, and I don't want them to feel like an outcast or anything if they have different beliefs than we do. At the end of the day we are all 'human beings,' and we can at least relate on that common ground." ***DOUG VAN PELT***

Ask Your Favorite Artist

[Family Force 5]

"IF YOU COULD ASK YOUR FAVORITE BAND OR SINGER THREE QUESTIONS, WHO IS THAT ARTIST AND WHAT WOULD THOSE QUESTIONS BE?"

We recently posed this question to our **myCCM.org** community and were intrigued by the responses. From now on, *CCM* will give one of our readers the chance to ask those questions. **Mallory Blevins** of Indian Land, S.C. (**myccm.org/mal4missions**), kicks things off this month by choosing **FAMILY FORCE 5**.



Mallory: What is one of the hardest things you have gone through being a Christian in today's world?
Nathan "Nadaddy" Currin (decks/keyboards): My most difficult times as a Christian have been those times when, instead of actively seeking God on a daily basis, I've taken His presence for granted and relied on my own observation and judgment to make major decisions. It's in those situations where God has allowed me to learn the hard way. When I pursue my own desires instead of God's desires, I fall every time.

Mallory: If you were an instrument which one would you be and why?
Nathan: I'd be a kettle drum. Ya know why? 'Cuz I don't see any other drum out there that you can play an entire song's melody on!

Mallory: What artist or band has had the most influence on Family Force 5?
Nathan: Carman. He was the true pioneer. If it wasn't for Carman, we wouldn't be able to wear bear suits and robot helmets on stage. Yep—Carman.

If you could ask your favorite artist three questions, what would they be? Let our editor know by leaving a message at his personal page at myCCM.org/Jay. You may just have your questions answered in one of the next issues of CCM!

BARLOWGIRL JOINS THE CALL TO UNITE IN PRAYER

AMERICA'S 56TH ANNUAL NATIONAL DAY OF PRAYER WILL BE MAY 3, and BarlowGirl has been named the event's official youth ambassador for 2007. Explained Chairman of the National Day of Prayer Task Force Shirley Dobson, "Music is one of the most powerful sources of inspiration and faith. It is a universal language that, when used to glorify God, can break down barriers and unite generations... This year, we are pleased to have BarlowGirl as our youth ambassador."

BarlowGirl's Alyssa Barlow responded, "We feel honored that we can serve [this way]... If there is one thing we've experienced in our lives, it is that prayer changes things. We want to be a part of encouraging people to press into God, pray and seek His face, then watch Him move in their lives."

BarlowGirl recently joined Rebecca St. James and Point of Grace to record the National Day of Prayer's new theme song, titled "We Pray." To find out more about BarlowGirl's efforts to communicate the importance of repentance and prayer, visit the youth page at **nationaldayofprayer.org**.

STORY BEHIND THE SONG:
FLYLEAF'S "FULLY ALIVE"

Flyleaf's LACEY MOSLEY recently set aside time for CCM readers to pen the inside story behind her latest multi-format hit "Fully Alive." The song has been on America's alternative and rock radio charts for the past five months.

"Fully Alive" was written when we were on the road with Trust Company and was initially inspired by Layla Palmer, the singer Kevin's wife. But today the song represents so many people, I couldn't tell you all of them right here...It would be a long, beautiful book all by itself. It is about a girl who went through a lot of pain and came out more beautiful because of it. Like it says in Romans, we can "rejoice in our sufferings because we know that suffering produces perseverance; perseverance, character; and character, hope" [Romans 5:3-4, NIV].

The people who have made the most impact in my life happened to have been people who have either seen or experienced the most suffering... It doesn't have to be that way, and obviously it isn't always that way. But if you meet someone like my friend, Salome McCaffery, who suffers from Lou Gehrig's disease, who can't stop smiling just because you came to visit her (despite the fact that she has been unable to move her muscles or express her beautiful, fully capable mind to anyone who doesn't have abnormal patience for as long as she can remember), it makes you, at the very least, grateful for your life. Someone like Salome will silence your complaining with her simple smile. The joy she has and her faith in God will cripple most anyone's reasons for thinking life has cheated them in some way. She truly is fully alive, more than most. One of my favorite authors, Brennan Manning [*The Ragamuffin Gospel*], has said that two things that get people's attention very well are fear and hope. I want to sing this song as long as I can with suffering people in mind, to the hopeless people I see filling up our audiences, looking for reasons to keep going. ***LACEY MOSLEY*** **myCCM.org/Flyleaf**

"THE PEOPLE WHO HAVE MADE THE MOST IMPACT IN MY LIFE HAPPENED TO HAVE BEEN PEOPLE WHO HAVE EITHER SEEN OR EXPERIENCED THE MOST SUFFERING..."
LACEY MOSLEY

FAITH ON THE MOVE

What do Anberlin, Copeland, Delirious, Family Force 5, Kendall Payne, Kutless, Switchfoot and Underoath have in common? Why clothes, of course...

Faced with our culture's prevalence of lifestyle alternatives promoting "self-gratification, greed and addiction," an unusual company decided to do something about it.

Jedidiah—it's the Hebrew word for love and is appropriately the name of the San Diego clothing manufacturer that shares its profits with different causes and efforts around the world. The philosophy is simple enough: "Life doesn't have to [stink] for everyone," says sales manager Jon Frank. "If we can make life better for somebody, anybody...that's good enough."

Not only are they making life better for people from Indonesia to Uganda to their own San Diego backyard; they're doing it in an amazingly cool way. Jedidiah employs a team of nationally known artists, including one of the world's most renowned graffiti artists, Dave Pursue. Together, these artists crank out unique, surfer-inspired designs on T-shirts, pants and hoodies, each with different themes and messages of hope, grace, encouragement, forgiveness and love.

"We often forget that fashion is an art form," says Jedidiah-endorsed recording artist Kendall Payne. "Art interjects beauty, mystery and contemplative thought into our mundane and monotonous lives. Jedidiah provides art that tells a story in a current and relative medium."

Kendall is one of about 10 artists of faith that Jedidiah supports, believes in and provides help through publicity or other avenues. San Diego born and raised, Switchfoot, is another proud Jedidiah artist. "Jedidiah uses thread and ink to tell the story of kids who need help and [tell] how to do something about it," Switchfoot's drummer Chad Butler tells *CCM*. "They are effectively communicating hope through the common media of T-shirts and jeans... They have invested in a dialogue of beauty and truth."

Jedidiah's products are currently in national retailers such as Macy's and Buckle stores around the country, but its fingerprints are being left around the world. Working through agencies such as the International Justice Mission, Invisible Children and Surfaid, the people behind Jedidiah have struck a balance between their own passions and the needs of men, women and children around the world.

Kendall sums it up pretty well: "I truly believe that if Jesus was walking the earth today, he'd be wearing a Jedidiah T-shirt...and maybe a hoodie."

To check out Jedidiah clothing online, visit jedidiahusa.com.

CAROLINE LUSK

IN THE STUDIO

WITH BARLOWGIRL

Going behind the scenes to get you ahead of the curve...

ALBUM TITLE: *How Can We Be Silent*
LABEL: Fervent
RELEASE DATE: July 24
RECORDING STUDIO: Paragon Studios, *Franklin, TN*
PRODUCER: Otto Price *(GRITS, By The Tree)*
NUMBER OF SONGS: 10

BARLOWGIRL'S EVOLUTION AS A BAND: "It has been stratospheric. Early on the girls played a bit more innocently and calmer, but over the last few years they have been playing with a lot more intensity and have coupled that with an appropriate amount of confidence."—*Otto Price*

THE MUSIC: "It's true to the BarlowGirl sound—our harmonies and very guitar-driven. But we did try some different styles and had fun with the instrumentation of this album. One song is jazzier, while another is more aggressive, a couple steps harder than anything we've recorded before. This is more of a dramatic rock album." —*Alyssa Barlow (lead vocals, bass, keys)*

THE LYRICAL THEMES: "Our songwriting comes out of our prayer times and journal entries... During the past year and a half, God really began revealing some things in our personal lives—cleaning house and going, 'I want you to deal with some of these issues; things that you think could be hidden, I want to bring to light and have you guys become more like Me.' There are some tough, painful songs on this album...just the honesty of what it felt like as God was really dealing with us. But then who God is and was through it and the hope that we found in it." *A.B.*

DALLAS AND ATLANTA CELEBRATE ANEW

CELEBRATE FREEDOM™ 2007

FOR THE PAST 16 YEARS, Dallas' 94.9 KLTY has hosted the largest free one-day concert in America with an annual estimated attendance surpassing 200,000 people. Apparently, when you're in Texas, even being the biggest isn't enough. Organizers recently announced that starting this year, Celebrate Freedom™ is expanding to a two-day event. And that's not all—in addition to the ginormous Celebrate Freedom™ festivities in Dallas, now Atlanta, Georgia will play host to a second Celebrate Freedom™ event each year.

So if you're within a day's drive of Dallas, mark **June 29-30** on your calendar, while those within striking distance of Atlanta can anticipate your first Celebrate Freedom™ fest this coming **September 1**.

In recent years, artists performing at Celebrate Freedom™ have included **The Afters**, **Building 429**, **Jeremy Camp**, **Casting Crowns**, **Rebecca St. James**, **Kutless**, **MercyMe**, **newsboys**, **Nichole Nordeman**, **Aaron Shust**, **Third Day** and **Chris Tomlin**, among many others. (At press time, both events were finalizing this year's artist line-ups.)

In addition to showcasing live music, both Celebrate Freedom™ events will feature renowned evangelist Luis Palau, Stephen Baldwin's skate board and BMX bike ministry "Livin' It," complete with exhibition platform, and numerous other activities tailored to family recreation and ministry.

While tickets for Celebrate Freedom™ are free, they are required for admission. You can download your free tickets at ***klty.com/celebratefreedom/index.htm****, or check the website for ticket locations.*

5 THINGS KRYSTAL MEYERS

WHEN IT COMES TO THE THINGS SHE LOVES, NATURALLY, KRYSTAL MEYERS IS AN ANTICONFORMIST...

[SUSHI] I had sushi for the first time when I was out in California recording my first record. I had it at this place called Sushi Roku in Beverly Hills, and it was amazing. I've been obsessed ever since!

[MY DOGS] Although I don't live at home anymore, I always look forward to visiting my family, including the dogs! I've always loved animals, and these are the sweetest dogs ever.

[MY FAMILY] I love my mom and dad and brother. They are a huge support system for me, and they mean the world to me!

[MAC MAKEUP] I've been using MAC makeup for a few years now, and I love their pigments in their eye shadows and blushes. It's definitely the best makeup line!

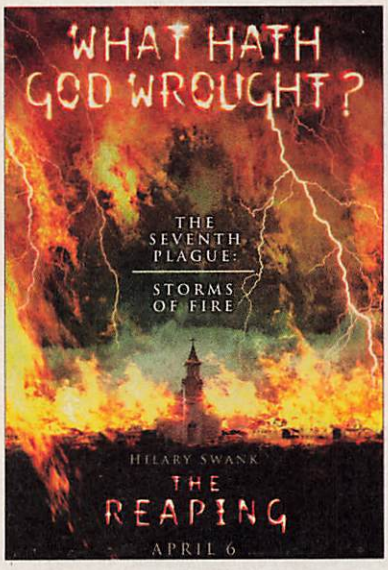
[FLOWERS FROM SOMEONE SPECIAL] There's nothing like getting flowers from someone special. Whenever I do, I dry them and keep them around my room.

[SAOSIN] This band's new record is incredible, and so anthemic. I absolutely love it!

Krystal Meyers' *latest album is* Dying for a Heart *(Essential). Currently she's on the "Generation Rising Tour" with Superchick, DecembeRadio, Everyday Sunday, Nevertheless and Group 1 Crew. Visit* ***krystalmeyers.com*** *to check on a tour date near you.*

SIGHTINGS

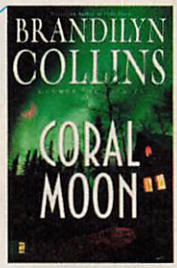
[of Faith in Culture] BY CHRIS WELL



WHAT HATH GOD WROUGHT?

ANBERLIN PARTNERED WITH WARNER BROS. PICTURES TO SPREAD THE WORD ABOUT APRIL'S THEATRICAL RELEASE ***THE REAPING***. AS THE BAND DESCRIBES IT ON THEIR OFFICIAL SITE, "IT HAS SOME PRETTY NASTY PLAGUES, A SCARY LITTLE GIRL AND HILLARY SWANK." GRACE HILL MEDIA NOTES, "ALTHOUGH CHRISTIAN THEMES ARE INHERENT THROUGHTOUT THE STORY LINE, THE FILM IS A THRILLER WITH A HARD 'R' RATING." DETAILS ABOUT THE FILM AT **THEREAPINGMOVIE.COM**.

So far, this has been a huge year for the guys in Anberlin: They made their broadcast television debut on "The Late Late Show with Craig Ferguson" and have spent most of their tour playing to sold-out venues. Anberlin's AOL Sessions Under the Cover included acoustic versions of tracks from *Cities*, plus a cover of Radiohead's "Creep."



MURDER AT KANNER LAKE

continues her pulse-pounding Kanner Lake series with the second entry, *Coral Moon* (Zondervan): *The senseless murder of a beloved Kanner Lake citizen spirals the small Idaho town into a terrifying glimpse of spiritual forces beyond our world. What appears true seems impossible—or is it?*

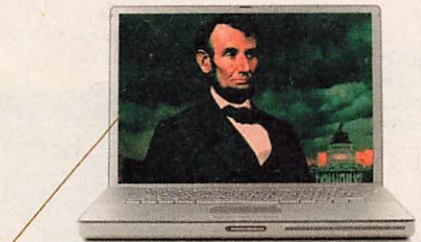
Details about the series online at **kannerlake.com**. The third volume, *Crimson Eve*, hits store in September. More info about the author at **myCCM.org/StaAkra**.

DREAMING UP A MILLION

Scott Christian Sava's online serial comic, the fantasy series *The Dreamland Chronicles*, has now surpassed the one-million readers mark. The daily series launched January 2006 and took less than a year to reach its millionth customer. The collected edition *The Dreamland Chronicles: Book One*, the first of a six-book epic, is now available from comics retailers and mainstream booksellers. Sava is also shopping it for Christian distribution. Follow the series online at **thedreamlandchronicles.com**.

20 YEARS AGO TODAY (MORE OR LESS)

YAHOO! MUSIC HAS BEEN CELEBRATING THE 20TH ANNIVERSARY OF **U2**'S MEGA-BREAKTHROUGH ***THE JOSHUA TREE***, THE ALBUM THAT MADE THEM SUPERSTARS. THE SITE (**MUSIC.YAHOO.COM**) FEATURES A BIOGRAPHY, A TIMELINE FOR THE HISTORY OF THE BAND, MUSIC, VIDEOS AND MORE.



3 Ways history would be different if ABRAHAM LINCOLN had a profile at myCCM.org

1. Continually checking Jay Swartzendruber's blog (**myCCM.org/Jay/blog**) to see if he's mentioned by name.
2. Endless comments posted by friends with some combination of, "Dude, that is a cool beard!" and "Thanks for the add!"
3. Would have contacted tobyMac (**myCCM.org/tobyMac**) to investigate possibility of running on same presidential ticket.

HEAR IT TO BELIEVE IT

WHAT'S BETTER THAN FREE FOOD? *FREE MUSIC.* Just ask Switchfoot's fans. First, the band began recording and selling live bootleg CDs after every concert on its "*Oh! Gravity* Tour" and then encouraged fans to share and trade those bootlegs with other fans online. Before Switchfoot could finish saying, "Give away free copies with our blessing," fans created a new website at **switchfootbootlegs.com** to do just that. Responded Switchfoot in a recent newsletter, "Within just a few hours, you all created a new website...that continues to grow every day and is completely run by you guys. We think it's pretty fantastic."

Gotee Records, meanwhile, has launched its own new website where you can download songs by their artists *free* of charge. All you need to do is register at **freegotee.com**, and you can immediately begin downloading select songs by Relient K, Family Force 5, John Reuben, Ayiesha Woods, House of Heroes and others. Those MP3s can be on your computer, iPod or other digital music device today!

YOU OUGHTTA BE [HEARD] IN PICTURES

Recent faith-informed rock overheard promoting family movies: Some TV commercials for the fantasy film *The Last Mimzy* have included the NEEDTOBREATHE song "Shine On," from the band's debut album, *Daylight* (Atlantic/Lava). The soundtrack album for the CGI flick *Meet The Robinsons* includes a track from the Jonas Brothers' "Kids of the Future" (rebuilt from the perennial pop hit "Kids of America").

MORE TO LIFE

Stacie Orrico and her label, Virgin Records, recently parted ways following the merger of Virgin and Capitol Records. While her new album, *Beautiful Awakening*, has been released by Virgin internationally, its domestic release has been postponed indefinitely. In the interim, Orrico announced on her website that she is using this career transition to fulfill a lifelong dream—traveling to Africa to help AIDS victims.

At press time, Orrico was auctioning off personal items including GRAMMY® dresses, clothes and jewelry worn in music videos and autographed posters and CDs to benefit African children exposed to AIDS. Orrico will be in Africa for an unspecified, lengthy stay.

For those who are anxiously awaiting new music, the import CD of *Beautiful Awakening* can still be purchased at **amazon.com**. ***LINDSAY WILLIAMS***

COME TOGETHER THE REGIONAL ARTIST GROUP THE SONGBIRD IS NOW SPREADING ITS REACH TO SUPPORT PROFESSIONAL AND AMATEUR CHRISTIAN ARTISTS FROM ALL OVER THE WORLD: THE INTERNATIONAL CHRISTIANS IN THE ARTS NETWORK (ICAN) OFFERS TEACHING, WORKSHOPS AND FELLOWSHIP TO ARTISTS OF ALL DISCIPLINES, INCLUDING DRAMA, MUSIC, LITERATURE, FILM, GRAPHIC ARTS AND MORE. FIND MORE INFO ONLINE AT **THESONGBIRD.ORG**.

ARTIST'S CHOICE
[Book of the Month]

This month recording artist **AARON SHUST** strongly recommends the book ***Velvet Elvis*** (Zondervan) by Rob Bell.

I've been a fan of Rob Bell's mind, his insight and his passion since the first time I watched one of his "Numa" DVDs and heard him speak at Willow Creek. His book, *Velvet Elvis*, came highly recommended by my friend Ryan, so we decided to use it in our discipleship group. Every chapter had jaw-dropping moments where we'd find ourselves saying, "That makes so much sense!"; "I never thought of it that way!"; or "How did I never know that?!" *Velvet Elvis* gives incredible insight into the world in which Jesus lived—the culture, traditions, figures of speech and customs that shed new light on why He may have said the things He said, and, therefore, what He may have actually meant.

This book is an easy read, almost conversational, and is great if you feel stagnant in your beliefs and are ready to have your systems challenged. If you are comfortable with what you believe, then you definitely need to read it. Seriously…I think you'll enjoy it. ***A.S.***

THE EYES HAVE IT

Gospel Music Channel (GMC), the nation's first 24-hour music television channel dedicated to all styles of Christian and Gospel music, has ranked as the No. 1 emerging or mid-size network in a survey of cable operators. GMC also ranked No. 1 in "audience attentiveness to advertising" and No. 1 in "feeling comfortable viewing with family" in a recent major advertising industry research report. Gospel Music Channel rated ahead of two dozen other cable networks, including The NFL Network, WE: Women's Entertainment, Soapnet, Hallmark Movie Channel, The Tennis Channel and Lifetime Real Women.

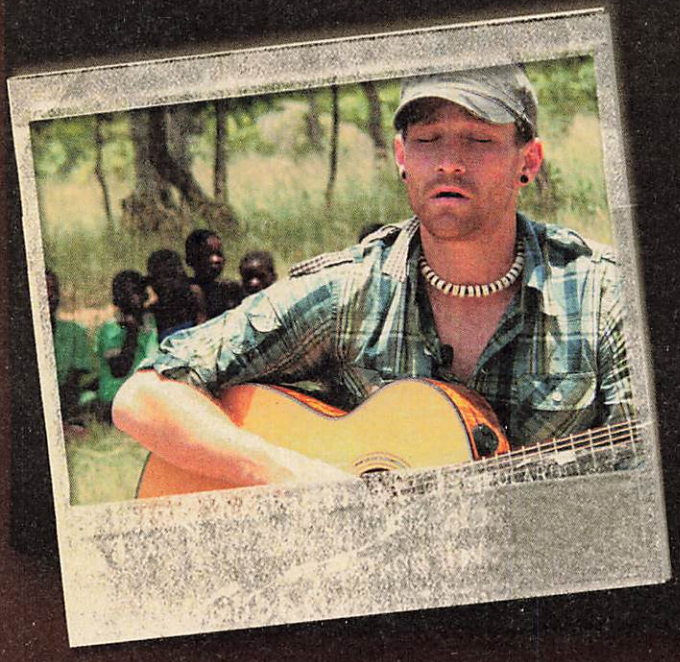
Shawn McDonald & World Vision In Zimbabwe

Travel halfway around the world with this thoughtful singer-songwriter as he experiences the life-changing work of World Vision firsthand.

Busy singer-songwriter Shawn McDonald didn't set out to become an advocate for Africa. He just knew he wanted to help others and was looking for an avenue that would allow him to do that. His wife, Kate, was knowledgeable and passionate about that troubled continent so her enthusiasm rubbed off. That's how they found themselves leaving their home in Seattle to travel to Zimbabwe in February 2007, not sure of what they'd encounter, but knowing they'd be forever changed.

McDonald admits he knew virtually nothing about Zimbabwe. "I knew about Africa as a whole, but every government is so different. Some countries' problems are disease-driven, some are due to a corrupt government." So he made a conscious effort to set aside any pre-conceived ideas of what he would encounter and just experience what God had planned for him.

The first thing that struck him was the attitude of the people they met as they visited farmsteads, villages and clinics. "They had nothing and the oppression there was incredible, but the joy and peace these people seemed to have was mind-boggling to me," McDonald recalls. "These people are poor and they're sick and yet they're full of joy and they're happy. Americans have everything and they're so miserable. It was this weird dichotomy of, 'wow, maybe we've got it all wrong.'"



That realization challenged the usual inclination to want to go in and modernize and Americanize. "I'd rather see them succeed in their own culture," he says, before quickly adding, "but I'd definitely love to see medication and some of the things we have such easy access to available there."

Thanks to World Vision, that's happening. While McDonald admits he had the same doubts many people have about any aid organization – Are they really helping? Are they really affecting these people? – his eyes were immediately opened.

"The reality is, it really does help. When a kid gets sponsored, it affects the whole family, the whole community. We got to see firsthand families that were changed, a lake that was created by a dam, clinics, wells they had dug where the people are actually getting clean water. To see the impact that it's making on the community was insane. And everyone there knows who World Vision is. There's this serious gratitude toward what they're doing, you can tell."

Still, with so much need all around, it can be easy to get overwhelmed. But McDonald knows that getting caught up in that won't change anything. "I could go over there and look at all the bad and be negative," McDonald says, "but I believe God is sovereign. Even though I see all this hurt and pain, I still see good come out of it. I went over there and I said, 'I see God. He's everywhere. I see people being helped, I see love everywhere, I see the Gospel everywhere.'"

Zimbabwe By the Numbers

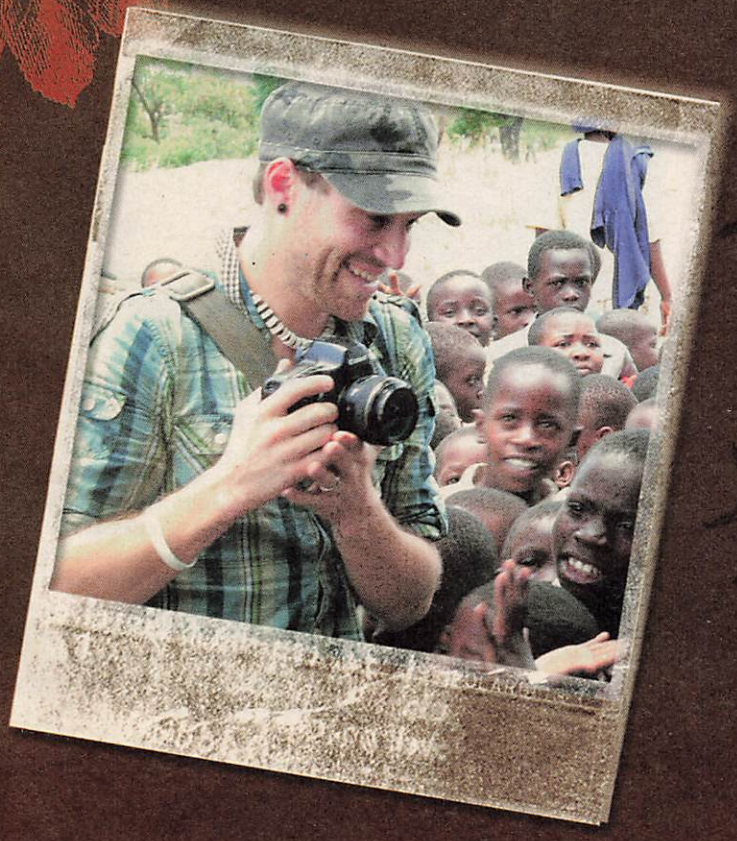
HISTORY: In 1923 European settlers voted to become the self-governing British colony of what was then called Southern Rhodesia. A first bid for independence in 1965 was not recognized by the U.K., but in 1979, U.N. sanctions and a guerrilla uprising resulted in free elections. Robert Mugabe won the presidency in a landslide victory and the country — now called Zimbabwe — gained independence on April 17, 1980. Despite this freedom, political and economic issues undermined the progress of Zimbabwe. The president's chaotic, and at times violent land distribution campaign, launched in 2000, negatively impacted the economy by causing widespread departure of European farmers. Commercial farming was nearly destroyed, 400,000 jobs were lost, and basic commodities faced huge shortages.

HIV/AIDS: 2.3 million people in Zimbabwe are living with HIV/AIDS, while 780,000 children have lost one or both parents to the disease.

ECONOMY: 70 percent of the people live below the poverty line. The inflation rate is 1,200 percent and unemployment is at a staggering 80 percent.

DROUGHT: In 2002, exceptionally high rainfall followed by extreme drought destroyed crops throughout southern Africa. Massive food shortages resulted. Zimbabwe was the worst-affected country in the region with 7 million people at risk.

WORLD VISION IN ZIMBABWE: Currently, 14,754 girls and boys are receiving the benefits of child sponsorship through U.S. donors. Four U.S. funded area development programs (ADPs) also are under way to help meet immediate needs and promote lasting changes that will strengthen communities and move families toward self-reliance.



Meeting Abton

"Abton, to me, was the epitome of a victim," McDonald says of the boy he met in Zimbabwe and couldn't forget. "Some people have a sob story and I can look at that and say, 'it's because they made really bad choices.' But Abton had nothing to do with his fate. His parents died of AIDS. He contracted AIDS from his mother. He was left with his grandma and she's too old to work so they're poor beyond poor. They can barely afford Abton's medicine. Just a really sad story.

"The day after we visited him, I was broken," McDonald says. "I went back that night and I was angry. I just didn't understand. This kid is a victim, he did nothing to deserve his fate. That was really hard for me," McDonald admits, fighting back tears. "He's a really neat kid. He couldn't speak any English. We gave him a soccer ball and you should have seen him just going crazy with it. He'd probably never had anything like that before."

Since Shawn's visit to Zimbabwe, Abton has been sponsored through World Vision. He and his family will now receive access to things like nutritious food, clean water, education and assistance in receiving the medical attention he needs.

Sponsor a child TODAY and help us bring hope to one child at a time.
Call 1-888-511-6548
or visit us at
www.worldvision.org/shawnmcdonald

World Vision is a Christian humanitarian organization dedicated to working with children, families and their communities worldwide to reach their full potential by tackling the causes of poverty and injustice. Motivated by our faith in Jesus Christ, World Vision serves alongside the poor and oppressed as a demonstration of God's unconditional love for all people. World Vision serves all people, regardless of religion, race, ethnicity, or gender.

World Vision
Building a better world for children

Source Code: 1146234

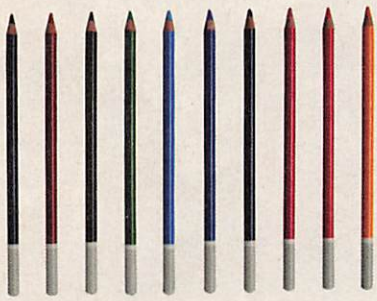
shawnmcdonaldmusic.com
worldvision.org

I GET MYSTY

GAMETAP OFFERS FREE GAMEPLAY OF *MYST ONLINE: URU LIVE*—NOW FOR MAC *AND* PC USERS. THE INTERACTIVE 3D WORLD CONTINUES THE STORY OF THE MYST FRANCHISE IN A MASSIVE MULTIPLAYER GAMING ENVIRONMENT. THE ORIGINAL GAMES, OF COURSE, WERE BLOCKBUSTERS THAT USHERED IN THE "IMMERSIVE ENVIRONMENT" GAME—AND WERE, AS REPORTED IN *WIRED MAGAZINE*, RIFE WITH CHRISTIAN ALLEGORY AND SYMBOLISM. VISIT **GAMETAP.COM/MYSTONLINE** TO SIGN UP.

all about mat

If you think you're seeing Mat Kearney all over the place, it's not just you: Since last issue, Mat cracked the Top 5 on VH1's "Top 20 Countdown," performed a stripped down show for On Demand that you can watch online and performed for AOL Sessions. What's next—the cover of *CCM*? *[Why, yes, actually.—Editor]*



startyourpencils

THE COMIX35 MINISTRY HAS LAUNCHED THE 2ND INTERNATIONAL CHRISTIAN COMICS COMPETITION. Entries must be an original, short feature (1-4 pages max), evangelistic in nature and/or display an aspect of Christian discipleship, and be appropriate for all ages. Complete rules and details at **comix35.gospelcom.net. The deadline is June 13, 2007.**

"These competitions continue our ministry's focus on helping Christians create evangelistic stories and messages," says COMIX35 president Nate Butler. "They enable us to do so even more proactively than the training events we have been holding for the past 11 years."

A Christian comics ministry based on Exodus 35:30-35, COMIX35 trains individuals and ministries around the world in the production and effective use of comics-style literature. Find Nate Butler at **myCCM.org/ChristianComics.**

FOR END-TIMES(ISH) COMEDY THRILLER, *TRIBULATION HOUSE*
(Harvest House)

1— *Tribulation House* **Brand Post-Rapture Pet Feeders***
2— **"Buy two copies–use one for jumbo coaster!"**
3— **Tell everybody that "Jerry Jenkins" is just your pen name.**

YOU SAY "HELLO," I SAY "BIOLA"

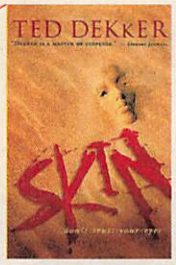
THE LAST WEEK OF APRIL, THE BIOLA MEDIA CONFERENCE CELEBRATED 12 YEARS OF ADVANCING THE INTEGRATION OF FAITH AND THE ARTS. THE APRIL 21 EVENT BROUGHT TOGETHER INFLUENTIAL MEDIA LEADERS WITH MEN AND WOMEN WHO BENEFIT FROM THEIR COLLECTIVE CHRISTIAN WISDOM FOR A DAY OF EDUCATION, INSPIRATION AND NETWORKING, WITH TOP INDUSTRY PRO'S FROM FILM, TV, RADIO, PR AND JOURNALISM.

BY GEORGE

Boxing (and electric grill) legend George Foreman returns to the world of print with *God in My Corner: A Spiritual Memoir* (Thomas Nelson). Written with Ken Abraham, the book shares how God has been behind the scenes of every part of Foreman's life—as an Olympian gold medalist, two-time heavyweight champion of the world, father, minister and businessman.

BACK IN THE RING

Speaking of legendary boxer George Foreman (and we were), his comeback was no doubt an inspiration for the sixth "Rocky" movie, which found Sylvester Stallone's former heavyweight champion stepping out of retirement for one last match. Now on DVD, *Rocky Balboa* garnered decent reviews from film critics—and the pulpit—for its depiction of faith and perseverance. All kinds of info and teaching materials online at **rockyresources.com.**



UNDER THE SKIN

Best-selling suspense novelist Ted Dekker is always coming up with new and unique ways to promote his novels. Just the latest example, his brand new thriller, *Skin* (WestBow), was promoted by a series of "unauthorized" videos on YouTube, which depict a group of teenage guys who get their hands on an early copy of the book, but the stubborn thing refuses to open for them.

Never one to stop writing, Dekker is also working on a series of young adult novels set within the world he created for his Circle Trilogy. Six books are planned, with the first two releasing January 2008.

THRILLER YEAR

IF YOU LOVE HEART-POUNDING CHRISTIAN SUSPENSE, HERE IS YOUR CHANCE TO WIN BIG: IN THE MONTH OF MAY, STA AKRA THRILLER WRITERS WILL PICK AT RANDOM 10 OF THEIR MYCCM "PEEPS"—AND SEND BOOKS TO THOSE 10 WINNERS. YOU COULD WIN ACCLAIMED TITLES FROM THE LIKES OF BRANDILYN COLLINS, TIM DOWNS, T.L. HINES, ROBERT LIPARULO, KATHRYN MACKEL, CRESTON MAPES, MELANIE WELLS, ERIC WILSON AND CHRIS WELL. (YES, I AM TALKING ABOUT MYSELF IN THE THIRD PERSON. DEAL WITH IT.) LOG ONTO **MYCCM.ORG/STAAKRA** FOR MORE INFO. HAPPY READING!

WHAT'S THE BUZZ?

Thomas Nelson and **Realbuzz Studios** have announced an exclusive multi-year contract to release a minimum of 26(!) manga titles under the WestBow imprint, Nelson's Christian Fiction Division. In May, Nelson will simultaneously re-launch the first six *Serenity* graphic novels, previously published by Barbour, and continue the series with four new volumes in 2008. The previously announced *Goofyfoot Gurl* will now make its debut splash in September 2007, with the simultaneous publication of the first four volumes. Faith-based entertainment company Good News Holdings is working with both Thomas Nelson and Realbuzz to promote the titles across multiple media outlets.

SOMETHING NEW

IF WE CAN GET ALL BIBLE ON YOU FOR A SECOND HERE: WHILE MANKIND CAN DO NOTHING NEW (ECCLESIASTES 1:9-14), GOD CAN MAKE US ALL NEW (2 CORONITHIANS 5:17). WHILE THERE HAVEN'T BEEN ALL THAT MANY SONGS ABOUT THE FORMER, THERE HAVE BEEN QUITE A FEW ABOUT THE LATTER. FOR EXAMPLE, THESE FOUR SONGS...

1 | TOBYMAC, "NEW WORLD"

From the *Music Inspired By The Chronicles of Narnia* (EMI CMG) soundtrack, this rocker highlights the tension of seeing what others cannot—and the urgency of trying to help them believe. With his latest album, *Portable Sounds* (ForeFront), tobyMac proved he's still got it: The album rocketed into *Billboard*'s Top 10, with a solo career-high of 50,645 copies sold the first week. Find Toby at **myCCM.org/tobyMac**.

2 | SWITCHFOOT, "NEW WAY TO BE HUMAN"

The title track of the band's 1999 sophomore album on the re:think label, this song is a timely jab at humanity's need for redemption—and how only God can make us who we are meant to be. (By the way, if you haven't seen the way cool music video, check it out on YouTube.)

3 | JOY WILLIAMS, "NEW DAY"

With this track, which kicks off her 2002 album *By Surprise* (Reunion), Joy Williams reminds listeners that no matter how much your life has been frustrating, disappointing or even embarrassing, God gives us tomorrow to try again.

4 | THIS BEAUTIFUL REPUBLIC, "NEW YEAR"

This engaging tune reaches out to the broken and disenfranchised, celebrating the healing and new beginning we can find in Jesus. It comes from This Beautiful Republic's brand new label debut, *Even Heroes Need a Parachute* (ForeFront). Find the band at **myCCM.org/ThisBeautifulRepublic**.

myCCM

[Where the Peeps Are] BY CHRIS WELL

BEGINNING THIS MONTH, CCM IS DEDICATING THIS SPACE IN EACH ISSUE TO OUR NEW ONLINE COMMUNITY, MYCCM.ORG. WATCH THIS COLUMN FOR FEATURED ARTISTS AND CONTRIBUTIONS FROM MYCCM MEMBERS.

featuredartists

1

MERCYME
myCCM.org/MercyMe
This Platinum-selling group returned last year with its landmark album, the INO Records release *Coming Up to Breathe*. "We just gave it everything we had," says the band's Bart Millard. "There was no holding back on this record." Check out the band's profile for music, bio, tour dates and even a slideshow.

2

SPENCER CHRISTIAN
myCCM.org/SpencerChristian
While still in school, this acoustic singer/songwriter led worship in two churches and performed at community events. Now in the U.S. Army infantry, serving overseas at Camp Casey in South Korea, Spencer hopes to reach the servicemen and young people in Korea while there. He plans to pursue his call as a Christian musician when his tour of duty is over.

3

REACHING FOR MERCY
myCCM.org/ReachingForMercy
Hailing from Aurora, Ill., this band cranks it up for fans of Dream Theater and Chevelle. It's also one of the most active members of the myCCM community: "If you have a prayer request, we would be more than happy to pray for you." Check out the band's profile for music, videos, tour dates and more.

4

NOEL MCLEARY
myCCM.org/NoelMcLeary
This artist has been wowing crowds since she was the "little girl with the big voice" as a soloist in her second grade Christmas concert. Now 18, Noel has a five-song EP—and is talking with labels about their interest in the next step of her career.

5

C-SICK THE CHOSEN ONE
myCCM.org/TCOCSick
A former gang member, this Christian rapper is determined to tell everyone about the saving power of Christ—hoping to "convert as many as he's corrupted." C-Sick will go toe-to-toe with any emcee. Head over to his myCCM profile for his bio and to listen to several tracks.

CONTESTS AT CCMMAGAZINE.COM

WE'RE GIVING AWAY COPIES OF THESE NEW DVDS, AVAILABLE IN STORES NOW! (ENTRY DEADLINE, MAY 31.)

Thr3e
Imagine answering your cell phone to a mysterious voice that gives you three minutes to confess your sins or die. Based on the novel by publishing sensation Ted Dekker, *Thr3e* is a taut and electrifying thriller where nothing is as it seems. Starring Marc Blucas (*First Daughter*, "Buffy the Vampire Slayer"), Max Ryan (*The League of Extraordinary Gentlemen*) and Bill Moseley (*The Devil's Rejects*), *Thr3e* is produced by Ralph Winter (*X-Men* trilogy, *Fantastic Four*) and directed by Robby Henson (*The Visitation*).

The Last Sin Eater
Based on Francine Rivers' inspirational best-seller. In a small Appalachian town in the 1850s, a 10-year-old girl is racked by guilt after her younger sister's death. With fierce determination, she confronts her fears and embarks on a quest for absolution that could ultimately save her entire community. Directed by Michael Landon, Jr. (*Love's Abiding Joy*).

The Sandlot: Heading Home
This all-new backyard baseball story again recruits the universal values of friendship, teamwork and determination to weave an inspiring story for sports fans of all ages. Bonus content includes a blooper reel, an on-the-set featurette, a "Backyard Baseball" computer game demo, a "Cal Ripken Academy" instructional video and an exclusive interview with Major League Baseball legend Rich "Goose" Gossage.

Bug Rangers: Submarine Sandwich
Everyone's favorite Roach Rangers are back with the fifth installment of their hit series. The Dove Foundation approved *Submarine Sandwich* draws upon the biblical story of Jonah in a hilarious tale of a family of roaches that learns an important lesson about obedience and the power of forgiveness.

Little Robots: Reach for the Sky
Featuring inspirational and educational tales constructed from the wacky misadventures of 11 lovable robots, this top-rated BBC animated series sports eye-catching stop-motion animation—and has earned kudos from the Dove Foundation for its wholesome educational messages and innovative and creative storylines.

CONGRATULATIONS TO THE WINNERS OF OUR RECENT CONTESTS, for which you can always find a list of winners online—there's a link to the winners' page from our "Contests Central" page.

THE PROOF IS IN THE BLOGGING

[WE'LL NOT ONLY TELL YOU WHO AND WHAT AT MYCCM YOU SHOULD KNOW ABOUT EACH MONTH, WE'LL EVEN SHOW YOU WHY. CONSIDER THESE TWO RECENT BLOG ENTRIES...]

FROM **TIFFANY FORD**
myCCM.org/PiratePrincess

The Musician
He is a musician and she's just his fiddle
Their music produced is simple and sweet
An undefined tune that brightens the sun
In the world of a simple girl with the will to run

A free spirit that says there is something not right
Yet, still too scared to stop and just evaluate
Though she is a fiddle and the music is sweet
There is still something hidden about her personality

The scars on her heart are beginning to split
From the once special bow that brought out the melody
The time has come to stop playing the game
She is not just a song that was meant to be sung

There are feelings inside her that are precious jewels
Yet, still his bow dances precariously close
It dances and prances like a 3-year-old child
With no regard to the wounds that it leaves in its wake

He walks around like he owns the place
That refuge in her heart that is so delicate
He doesn't really get what he is doing inside...
And, yet, still she refuses to give him a clue

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FROM **ELIZABETH G**
myCCM.org/elittlebit/blog

God's love in Isaiah 62:5...
So I just wanted to share with you (the awesome reader who is reading this) what I read in my Bible today in my quiet time with God. I thought it was pretty cool...but hold on a second. I'm just looking out the window, and there is the most beautiful rainbow arching across the sky, oh! The sun is out and seriously, you know those types of rainbows that seem like the colors are all kinda blurring together? Well not this one; each color is like the bold stroke of a paint brush, well, almost. :) Wow! Okay, so I was looking for certain verses in the Bible when I came upon this one, you probably have heard it before, but here it is again:

"...As a bridegroom rejoices over his bride, so will your God rejoice over you."—Isaiah 62:5

I think that that is just so awesome! I'm sure most of you have been to a wedding before, but instead of turning around in your seats and looking at the bride as she comes through the doors, have you ever stayed looking straight ahead at the bridegroom's face? I remember I did once, and I remember seeing his face when he saw his bride; it literally lit up and there was so much joy and love on his face. But the cool thing is to think that that's how God looks and feels about us, but not just "us" as a group, but each one of us individually as His own child. You, that's how God looks and feels about *you*! And when you think that the bridegroom is going to burst from so much love and joy, it's nothing compared to God's love and joy for us. God loves and rejoices over us so much more! His love is so much more infinitely satisfying, and He will never stop loving us! How awesome is that?! So the next time you're at a wedding, along with having the opportunity to be a part of such a special occasion and covenant, think about Isaiah 62:5 when you see the bridegroom's face, and think about just how much God loves and rejoices over you!

Your sister in Christ,
Elizabeth

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**If you hope to see yourself in this column, the first step is to set up your own profile at myCCM.org. Act today—operators are standing by! (Well, it's all computerized, but you know what we mean...and, hey, it's FREE.)*

MYCCM KNOWS ROCK

1. **SKILLET** myCCM.org/Skillet
2. **DISCIPLE** myCCM.org/Disciple
3. **NEWSBOYS** myCCM.org/Newsboys
4. **CHRISTINE EVANS** myCCM.org/ChristineEvans
5. **TODD AGNEW** myCCM.org/ToddAgnew
6. **STEVE EADS** myCCM.org/SteveEads
7. **NEVERTHELESS** myCCM.org/Nevertheless
8. **CAPTAIN ALEXANDER** myCCM.org/Capt_Alexander
9. **FIREFLIGHT** myCCM.org/Fireflight
10. **UNKNOWN SOULDIER** myCCM.org/UnknownSouldier

CHECK OUT THIS MONTH'S FEATURED PODCASTS ON CCMMAGAZINE.COM

MAY 7—BUILDING 429
MAY 14—FLATFOOT 56
MAY 21—KJ-52
MAY 28—ARTICLE ONE

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Chris Well claims to be an award-winning editor, acclaimed novelist and rogue mountain climber. Says Chris: "Not many people know this, but I'm quite famous." Keep up with his latest exploits at **myCCM.org/ChrisWell**.

THE TOP-SELLING CHRISTIAN ALBUMS ACCORDING TO NIELSEN SOUNDSCAN

Nielsen SoundScan

TOP CHRISTIAN/GOSPEL ALBUMS OVERALL

TW	LW	WO	ARTIST—*Album* (Label)
1	1	3	**RELIENT K**—***Five Score and Seven Years Ago*** (Capitol/Gotee)
2	2	5	**TOBYMAC**—*Portable Sounds* (ForeFront)
3	--	1	**HASTE THE DAY**—*Pressure the Hinges* (Solid State)
4	5	13	**SELAH**—*Hiding Place* (Curb)
5	9	49	**MAT KEARNEY**—*Nothing Left to Lose* (Aware/Columbia/Inpop)
6	3	8	**VARIOUS**—*WOW Gospel 2007* (Verity)
7	4	3	**VARIOUS**—*Wonderful Cross* (WorshipTogether)
8	11	76	**FLYLEAF**—*Flyleaf* (Octone/S-R-E)
9	6	3	**VARIOUS**—*WOW Hymns* (Word)
10	7	25	**VARIOUS**—*WOW Hits 2007* (Sparrow/EMI)
11	20	3	**VARIOUS**—*Glory Revealed* (Reunion)
12	10	3	**ELVIS PRESLEY**—*Elvis: Ultimate Gospel* (Provident)
13	8	5	**ANBERLIN**—*Cities* (Tooth & Nail)
14	14	26	**CHRIS TOMLIN**—*See the Morning* (sixsteps)
15	12	56	**ALAN JACKSON**—*Precious Memories* (ACR/Arista Nashville)
16	15	82	**CASTING CROWNS**—*Lifesong* (Beach Street)
17	18	21	**NEWSBOYS**—*Go* (Inpop)
18	13	30	**VARIOUS**—*Three Wooden Crosses* (Word)
19	17	25	**SKILLET**—*Comatose* (Ardent/S-R-E/Lava/Atlantic)
20	--	1	**SEVENTH DAY SLUMBER**—*Finally Awake* (BEC)
21	--	5	**FAMILY FORCE 5**—*Business Up Front, Party in the Back* (Gotee)
22	19	26	**MARK SCHULTZ**—*Broken & Beautiful* (Word)
23	16	2	**THE McCLURKINS**—*We Praise You* (Gospo Centric)
24	21	77	**KIRK FRANKLIN**—*Hero* (Gospo Centric)
25	35	92	**CASTING CROWNS**—*Casting Crowns* (Beach Street)
26	--	1	**BILL & GLORIA GAITHER**—*South African Homecoming* (Springhouse)
27	--	1	**BILL & GLORIA GAITHER**—*Love Can Turn the World* (Springhouse)
28	24	44	**TYE TRIBBETT**—*Victory* (Integrity)
29	25	21	**JEREMY CAMP**—*Beyond Measure* (BEC)
30	22	25	**FRED HAMMOND**—*Free to Worship* (Verity)
31	23	13	**SWITCHFOOT**—*Oh! Gravity.* (Columbia/Sparrow)
32	26	9	**VARIOUS**—*Amazing Grace: Music Inspired by the Motion Picture* (Sparrow)
33	98	7	**BISHOP GE PATTERSON**—*Having Church With the Saints* (POD)
34	27	3	**JOHNNY CASH**—*Cash: Ultimate Gospel* (Integrity)
35	32	92	**CHRIS TOMLIN**—*Arriving* (sixsteps)
36	29	5	**EVERLIFE**—*Everlife* (Hollywood/Buena Vista)
37	38	73	**THIRD DAY**—*Wherever You Are* (Essential)
38	--	1	**SHIRLEY MURDOCK**—*Soulfood* (Tyscot)
39	28	9	**ERNIE HAASE & SIGNATURE SOUND**—*Get Away Jordan* (Springhouse)
40	31	18	**PATTI LABELLE**—*The Gospel According to Patti LaBelle* (Bungalo)

Check out **FLYLEAF**'s Story Behind the Song on Page 11.

FF5's "Nadaddy" gets quizzed by a *CCM* reader on Page 10.

Review of this **CASH** album appears on Page 54.

TOP ROCK/ALTERNATIVE ALBUMS

TW	WO	ARTIST—*Album* (Label)
1	4	**RELIENT K**—***Five Score and Seven Years Ago*** (Capitol/Gotee)
2	6	**TOBYMAC**—*Portable Sounds* (Forefront)
3	1	**HASTE THE DAY**—*Pressure the Hinges* (Solid State)
4	76	**FLYLEAF**—*Flyleaf* (Octone/S-R-E)
5	6	**ANBERLIN**—*Cities* (Tooth & Nail)
6	25	**SKILLET**—*Comatose* (Ardent/S-R-E/Lava/Atlantic)
7	1	**SEVENTH DAY SLUMBER**—*Finally Awake* (BEC)
8	52	**FAMILY FORCE 5**—*Business Up Front, Party in the Back* (Gotee)
9	6	**SWITCHFOOT**—*Oh! Gravity.* (Columbia/Sparrow)
10	73	**THIRD DAY**—*Wherever You Are* (Essential)
11	27	**JONNY LANG**—*Turn Around* (A&M)
12	18	**P.O.D.**—*Greatest Hits (The Atlantic Years)* (Atlantic)
13	42	**RED**—*End of Silence* (Essential)
14	40	**UNDEROATH**—*Define the Great Line* (Tooth & Nail)
15	78	**BARLOWGIRL**—*Another Journal Entry* (Fervent)
16	108	**KUTLESS**—*Strong Tower* (BEC)
17	211	**CHEVELLE**—*Wonder What's Next* (Integrity)
18	32	**LEELAND**—*Sound of Melodies* (Essential)
19	26	**PILLAR**—*The Reckoning* (Flicker)
20	35	**STELLAR KART**—*We Can't Stand Sitting Down* (Word)

TOP R&B/HIP HOP ALBUMS

TW	WO	ARTIST—*Album* (Label)
1	2	**SHIRLEY MURDOCK**—***Soulfood*** (Tyscot)
2	18	**PATTI LABELLE**—*The Gospel According to Patti LaBelle* (Bungalo)
3	2	**EVERYDAY PROCESS**—*Process of Illumination & Elimination* (Cross Movement)
4	33	**LECRAE**—*After the Music Stops* (Cross Movement)
5	92	**TOBYMAC**—*Welcome to Diverse City* (ForeFront)
6	24	**LATTIMORE/MOORE**—*Uncovered* (La Face)
7	92	**KJ-52**—*Behind the Musik* (BEC)
8	18	**GRITS**—*Redemption* (Gotee)
9	81	**CECE WINANS**—*Purified* (Pure Springs Gospel/INO)
10	25	**VARIOUS**—*Body + Soul Gospel* (Time Life)
11	52	**GRITS**—*7* (Gotee)
12	47	**KJ-52**—*KJ-52 Remixed* (BEC)
13	32	**VARIOUS**—*Hip Hope 2007* (Gotee)
14	84	**LECRAE**—*Real Talk* (Cross Movement)
15	79	**DA T.R.U.T.H.**—*The Faith* (Cross Movement)
16	36	**21:03**—*Twenty One O Three* (Verity)
17	13	**SOUL P**—*The Premiere* (Beatmart)
18	8	**WHAT**—*Psalm 151* (N10se)
19	51	**PETTIDEE**—*Thug Love* (Beatmart)
20	35	**TRIP LEE**—*If They Only Knew* (Reach)

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Hit Lists cont. on Page 24

MUSIC YOU BELIEVE

DAYWIND

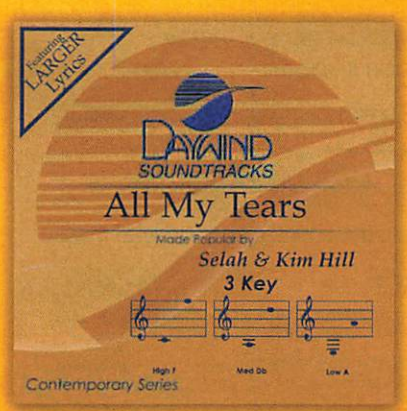
NEW Contemporary Tracks

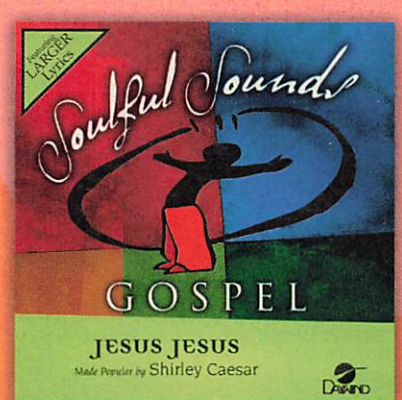
SONG TITLE	MADE POPULAR BY
All My Tears	Selah & Kim Hill
Be Lifted High	Michael W. Smith
Beautiful Savior	Casting Crowns
Broken And Beautiful	Mark Schultz
Everlasting God	Chris Tomlin
Give It All Away	Aaron Shust
Glory	Selah & Nichole Nordeman
Hear Us From Heaven	Jared Anderson
How Can I Keep Singing	Chris Tomlin
I Give You My Heart	Hillsong
Made To Worship	Chris Tomlin
Make My Life A Prayer	Kathy Troccoli
Pray For Rain	Binions
Prodigal	Casting Crowns
Sing Over Me	Bethany Dillon & Nichole Nordeman
Top Of My Lungs	Phillips, Craig & Dean
Was It A Morning Like This	Sandi Patty
When Did You Fall	Chris Rice
You Are Loved (Don't Give Up)	Josh Groban
Your Name	Phillips, Craig & Dean

Top Praise & Worship Tracks

SONG TITLE	MADE POPULAR BY
He Is Jehovah	Kenneth Copeland
I Can Only Imagine	Mercy Me
Above All	Michael W. Smith
Say The Name	Martha Munizzi
I'm Amazed	Jason Crabb & Brooklyn Tabernacle Choir
Lord, You're Holy	Karen Wheaton
Made To Worship	Chris Tomlin
My Savior, My God	Aaron Shust
You Are My King	Phillips, Craig & Dean
Love Song	Third Day

NEW Soulful Sounds

SONG TITLE	MADE POPULAR BY
Celebrate (He Lives)	Fred Hammond
Endow Me	Coko
God Still Heals	DeWayne Woods
Jesus	Shirley Caesar
More Than Anything	Lamar Campbell
Perfect Peace	Marvin Sapp
Struggle Is Over	Youth For Christ

ALL MY TEARS
Made popular by Selah & Kim Hill



JESUS JESUS
Made popular by Shirley Caesar

FOR THOSE TEARS I DIED
Made popular by Gaither

DAYWIND SOUNDTRACKS

Available at your local Christian bookstore. For a complete soundtrack listing, visit www.daywind.com.

Hit Lists cont. from Page 22

TOP ADULT CONTEMPORARY/POP ALBUMS

TW	WO	ARTIST—*Album* (Label)
1	49	**MAT KEARNEY**—*Nothing Left to Lose* (Aware/Columbia/Inpop)
2	3	**VARIOUS**—*WOW Hymns* (Word)
3	25	**VARIOUS**—*WOW Hits 2007* (Sparrow/EMI)
4	83	**CASTING CROWNS**—*Lifesong* (Beach Street)
5	21	**NEWSBOYS**—*Go* (Inpop)
6	26	**MARK SCHULTZ**—*Broken & Beautiful* (Word)
7	182	**CASTING CROWNS**—*Casting Crowns* (Beach Street)
8	21	**JEREMY CAMP**—*Beyond Measure* (BEC)
9	9	**VARIOUS**—*Amazing Grace: Music Inspired by the Motion Picture* (Sparrow)
10	5	**EVERLIFE**—*Everlife* (Hollywood/Buena Vista)
11	109	**MERCYME**—*Almost There* (INO)
12	48	**MERCYME**—*Coming Up to Breathe* (INO)
13	3	**NICHOLE NORDEMAN**—*Recollection: The Best of Nichole Nordeman* (Sparrow)
14	1	**NICOLE C. MULLEN**—*Live From Cincinnati* (Word)
15	33	**JONAS BROTHERS**—*It's About Time* (INO)
16	33	**SELAH**—*Bless the Broken Road: The Duets* (Curb)
17	20	**MICHAEL W. SMITH**—*Stand* (Reunion)
18	1	**REBECCA ST. JAMES**—*Alive in Florida* (ForeFront)
19	29	**JARS OF CLAY**—*Good Monsters* (Essential)
20	25	**CASTING CROWNS**—*Lifesong Live* (Beach Street)

MATT REDMAN's songs aren't the only things about him that are deep. Check out his story on Page 46.

TOP PRAISE & WORSHIP ALBUMS

TW	WO	ARTIST—*Album* (Label)
1	3	**VARIOUS**—*Wonderful Cross* (WorshipTogether)
2	3	**VARIOUS**—*Glory Revealed* (Reunion)
3	24	**CHRIS TOMLIN**—*See the Morning* (sixsteps)
4	131	**CHRIS TOMLIN**—*Arriving* (sixsteps)
5	74	**VARIOUS**—*Open the Eyes of My Heart* (INO)
6	29	**HILLSONG**—*Mighty to Save* (Integrity)
7	13	**PASSION**—*Best of Passion Band (So Far)* (sixsteps)
8	51	**VARIOUS**—*WOW Worship: Aqua* (Provident)
9	11	**MATT REDMAN**—*Beautiful News* (sixsteps)
10	3	**VARIOUS**—*Beautiful Worship* (INO)
11	4	**VARIOUS**—*51 Must Have Modern Worship Hits* (Integrity)
12	20	**VARIOUS**—*iWorship Platinum* (Integrity)
13	3	**JEREMY RIDDLE**—*Full Attention* (Varietal)
14	61	**AARON SHUST**—*Anything Worth Saying* (Brash)
15	51	**UNITED**—*United We Stand* (Integrity)
16	20	**LINCOLN BREWSTER**—*Let the Praises Ring* (Integrity)
17	289	**MICHAEL W. SMITH**—*Worship* (Reunion)
18	1	**SHEILA WALSH**—*The Best of Sheila Walsh* (Integrity)
19	74	**RANDY TRAVIS**—*Glory Train: Songs of Worship* (Word)
20	78	**DAVID CROWDER BAND**—*A Collision* (sixsteps)

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THE TOP SONGS ON CHRISTIAN RADIO ACCORDING TO CRW

TOP ADULT CONTEMPORARY/POP SONGS

	ARTIST—*Song*—Album (Label)
1	**LINCOLN BREWSTER**—***Everlasting God***—The Best of Lincoln Brewster (Integrity)
2	**CASTING CROWNS**—*Does Anybody Hear Her*—Lifesong (Beach Street/Reunion/PLG)
3	**TOBYMAC**—*Made to Love*—Portable Sounds (ForeFront/EMI)
4	**RUSH OF FOOLS**—*Undo*—Rush of Fools (Midas)
5	**ECHOING ANGELS**—*You Alone*—You Alone (INO)
6	**CHRIS TOMLIN**—*How Can I Keep From Singing*—See the Morning (sixsteps/EMI)
7	**BEBO NORMAN**—*I Will Lift My Eyes*—Between the Dreaming and the Coming True (Essential/PLG)
8	**MERCYME**—*Hold Fast*—Coming Up to Breathe (INO)
9	**VARIOUS**—*By His Wounds*—Glory Revealed (Reunion/PLG)
10	**NEWSBOYS**—*Something Beautiful*—Go (Inpop)
11	**BIG DADDY WEAVE**—*Every Time I Breathe*—Every Time I Breathe (Fervent/Word-Curb)
12	**JEREMY CAMP**—*What It Means*—Beyond Measure (BEC)
13	**33MILES**—*What Could Be Better (The Days Ahead)*—What Could Be Better (The Days Ahead) (INO)
14	**JOHN WALLER**—*The Blessing*—The Blessing (Beach Street/Reunion/PLG)
15	**THIRD DAY**—*Tunnel*—Wherever You Are (Essential/PLG)
16	**MARK SCHULTZ**—*Walking Her Home*—Broken & Beautiful (Word-Curb)
17	**JASON GRAY**—*Blessed Be*—All the Lovely Losers (Centricity)
18	**DAVID CROWDER BAND**—*Foreverandever Etc.*—A Collision (sixsteps/EMI)
19	**MARK HARRIS**—*Wish You Were Here*—The Line Between the Two (INO)
20	**NATALIE GRANT**—*Awaken*—Awaken (Curb)

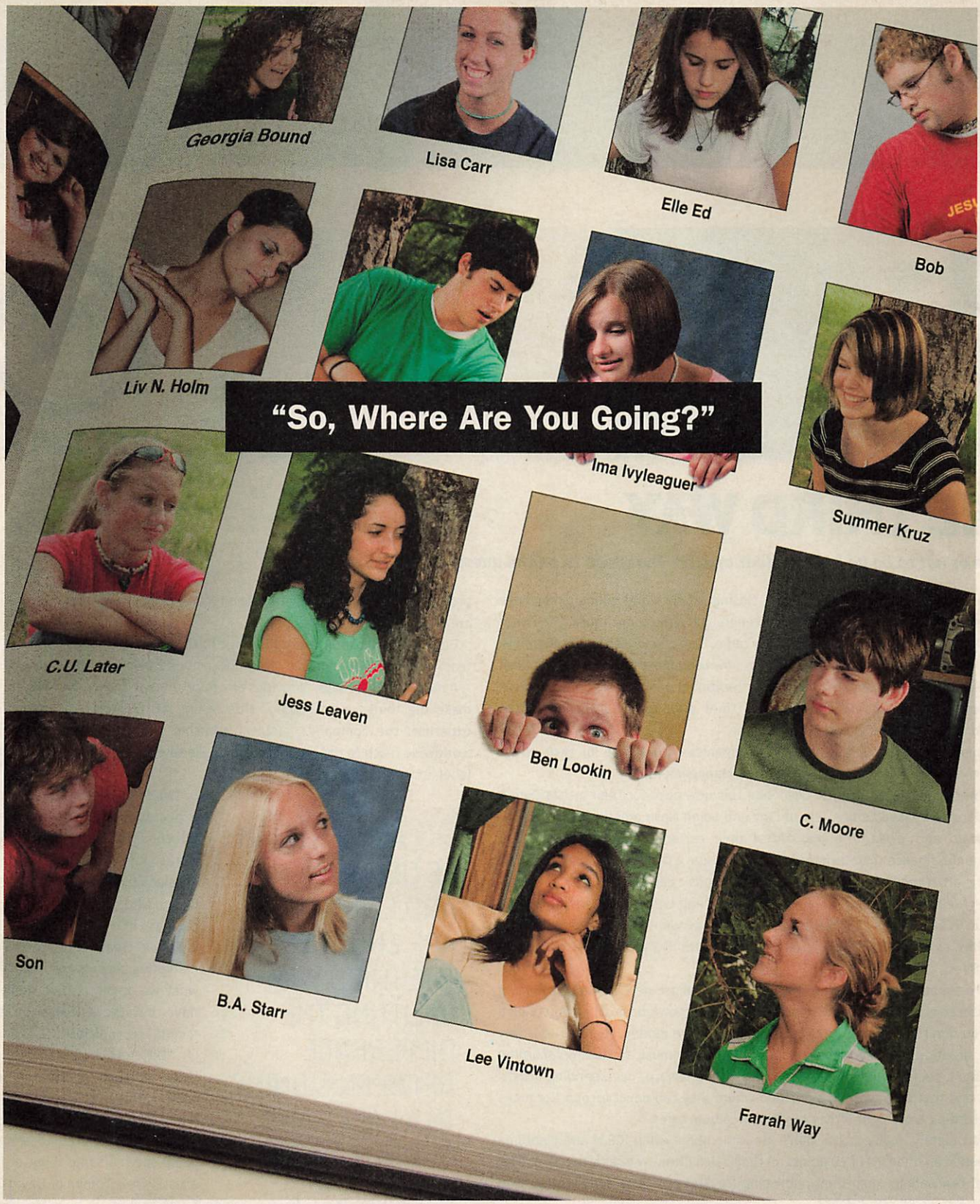
TOP CONTEMPORARY HIT SONGS

	ARTIST—*Song*—Album (Label)
1	**TOBYMAC**—***Made to Love***—Portable Sounds (ForeFront/EMI)
2	**RELIENT K**—*Forgiven*—Five Score and Seven Years Ago (Gotee)
3	**SANCTUS REAL**—*Don't Give Up*—The Face of Love (Sparrow/EMI)
4	**STARFIELD**—*Everything is Beautiful*—Beauty in the Broken (Sparrow/EMI)
5	**THE FRAY**—*How to Save a Life*—How to Save a Life (Epic)
6	**SUPERCHICK**—*Stand in the Rain*—Beauty From Pain (Inpop)
7	**JEREMY CAMP**—*Tonight*—Beyond Measure (BEC)
8	**THOUSAND FOOT KRUTCH**—*Breathe You In*—The Art of Breaking (Tooth & Nail)
9	**JARS OF CLAY**—*Work*—Good Monsters (Essential/PLG)
10	**BUILDING 429**—*I Believe*—Rise (Word-Curb)
11	**SKILLET**—*The Last Night*—Comatose (Ardent/S-R-E)
12	**EVERYDAY SUNDAY**—*Find Me Tonight*—Wake Up! Wake Up! (Inpop)
13	**CASTING CROWNS**—*Set Me Free*—Lifesong (Beach Street/Reunion/PLG)
14	**STELLAR KART**—*Hold On*—We Can't Stand Sitting Down (Word-Curb)
15	**JIMMY NEEDHAM**—*Dearly Loved*—Dearly Loved (Inpop)
16	**NEVERTHELESS**—*The Real*—Live Like We're Alive (Flicker)
17	**LEELAND**—*Yes You Have*—Sound of Melodies (Essential/PLG)
18	**JESSIE DANIELS**—*What I Hear*—Jessie Daniels (Midas)
19	**DISCIPLE**—*After the World*—Scars Remain (INO)
20	**DAVID CROWDER BAND**—*Foreverandever Etc.*—A Collision (sixsteps/EMI)

TOP ROCK SONGS

	ARTIST—*Song*—Album (Label)
1	**NEVERTHELESS**—***Live Like We're Alive***—Live Like We're Alive (Flicker)
2	**EVERYDAY SUNDAY**—*Wake Up! Wake Up!*—Wake Up! Wake Up! (Inpop)
3	**THE SHOWDOWN**—*Death Finds Us Breathing*—Temptation Come My Way (Mono vs. Stereo)
4	**RELIENT K**—*Forgiven*—Four Score and Seven Years Ago (Gotee)
5	**DECYFER DOWN**—*No Longer*—End of Grey (S/R/E)
6	**PILLAR**—*When Tomorrow Comes*—The Reckoning (Flicker)
7	**STELLAR KART**—*Procrastinating*—We Can't Stand Sitting Down (Word-Curb)
8	**ELEVENTYSEVEN**—*Nostalgiatopia*—And the Land of Fake Believe (Flicker)
9	**SKILLET**—*The Last Night*—Comatose (Ardent/S-R-E)
10	**THIS BEAUTIFUL REPUBLIC**—*Going Under*—Even Heroes Need a Parachute (ForeFront/EMI)
11	**SEVENTH DAY SLUMBER**—*Missing Pages*—Once Upon a Shattered Life (BEC)
12	**THE WEDDING**—*Say Your Prayers*—Polarity (Brave New World)
13	**DISCIPLE**—*After the World*—Scars Remain (INO)
14	**ANBERLIN**—*A Whisper and a Clamor*—Cities (Tooth & Nail)
15	**FALLING UP**—*Searchlights*—Exit Lights (Tooth & Nail)
16	**THE ALMOST**—*Say This Sooner*—Southern Weather (Tooth & Nail)
17	**THOUSAND FOOT KRUTCH**—*Hit the Floor*—The Art of Breaking (Tooth & Nail)
18	**MAINSTAY**—*These Pages*—Well Meaning Fiction (BEC)
19	**FLYLEAF**—*Perfect*—Flyleaf (Octone)
20	**JOHN REUBEN**—*Word of Mouth*—Word of Mouth (Gotee)

*Each chart reflects Christian radio airplay for the week ending ***March 23, 2007*** as tabulated by *Christian Radio & Retail Weekly*. © 2007 CRW. All rights reserved. **christianradioweekly.com**



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NETTWERK

THE THIRD WAY

"To be or not to be an independent artist?" That used to be the question.

Is the record label dying? Sagging sales, closing retailers and online piracy have pummeled the music business, while listeners consume more music than ever through outlets such as MySpace, satellite radio, iTunes and traditional channels.

It's also a buyer's market for artists, who now have more options: a traditional label deal, independence or a hybrid, non-traditional deal. Artists such as Derek Webb and Leigh Nash are choosing the third way, splitting the difference between signing to a label and going it alone.

Pioneering this 'third way' are two companies with a foot (or two) in the Christian market: INO Records and Nettwerk Management.

Nettwerk chief Terry McBride described this new path for their artists (Sarah McLachlan, Barenaked Ladies, Jars of Clay and Leigh Nash among them) last fall in *Billboard* and *Wired*. The plan: After their current deal expires, they go independent, finance their own recordings, and sign a distribution-only deal that reaps the artist much more of the money their music earns.

Derek Webb has tried all three—making his living doing music for more than a decade in Caedmon's Call, Webb was both independent and signed to a major label. Now, as a solo artist, he has a hybrid deal with INO (home to MercyMe and Sara Groves).

"There are advantages to all three," says Webb whose new album, *The Ringing Bell*, released May 1. "Being independent, you're your own boss; when you're on a label, you don't have any of the responsibility for the money. My favorite is [my current situation]," where Webb's responsible for the music (including recording costs), the label for selling it. Labels, he says, tend toward "overspending artists' money, and that puts them in a position where they can never recoup," or make back recording costs before they profit from album sales.

Unfortunately, many artists don't. He remembers when R.E.M and Madonna commanded an unheard of 20 points on their sales. "Now, with a Nettwerk or INO, an artist can walk in, keep their publishing [royalties on their songwriting], and it's like having a 50-point deal."

What he describes, of course, requires an artist to be established, like Webb or Nash. But not every artist is—or wants that level of responsibility.

Brad O'Donnell, who heads artist signing and development at EMI Christian Music Group (home to tobyMac, Steven Curtis Chapman and scores of others), has observed a shift in the music business. "It's a good time to be an artist right now; you have options. The good news is that a lot of the basics that a label used to provide—make a record, distribute a record, raise awareness of a record—there are a lot of ways to do that."

But O'Donnell contends for the value of the label—a good one, anyway. And his team at EMI CMG is trying to offer more options than just the old-fashioned deal.

A major label, he says, "provides an opportunity to make good things great and make big things even bigger." He's selling his creative and marketing folks' expertise, the company's stable leadership in a stormy industry and EMI's worldwide reach to the artists he courts. He says they're trying to be both the big label and the small, indie-like one.

> "ARTISTS SUCH AS DEREK WEBB AND LEIGH NASH ARE CHOOSING THE THIRD WAY, SPLITTING THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN SIGNING TO A LABEL AND GOING IT ALONE."

"When you're on a major label, high expectations and high dollars are attached to you immediately." That works for some. But with upstart division Credential Recordings (Dizmas, Edison Glass), "we're trying to build the business in a way that allows an artist to grow creatively," by making and marketing records for less. "We spend what we spend, so we don't have to have a huge success on the first record," he explains.

"Different artists require different kinds of labels at different points in their career," O'Donnell says. "John Mayer and Death Cab started on an indie and graduated to a major. You could say the same thing of [EMI CMG artists] Chris Tomlin or David Crowder."

Webb has done that in reverse, taking a path that might be more risky. "That's kind of what I like. It teaches the artist to do the work.

"Before, it was like the poor, helpless artist came to the big label to do everything. That's totally unhealthy. No wonder they give them such bad deals." To follow the 'third way,' Webb says you essentially have to be your own small business. "The new way trains the artist not to need the label—and not to be so afraid." That's ideal for some artists—but not for everyone.

Beau Black teaches English for Weatherford College and Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University near his home in Fort Worth, Texas. He has written about the Christian music industry for more than a decade. **myccm.org/beaublack**

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GREETINGS.

Since this is my first column for *CCM*, I need to tell you a quick story before I get to the most important thing here, which is you and new music.

A long time ago, I had this friend who used to make me mix tapes (yes, tapes!) introducing me to new bands, many of which I hated at first listen. I would roll my eyes when I would receive these tapes, and he would grab me by the shoulder and say, "Just listen to this—it will change you."

Five years after he said that I was screaming at strangers from stages (as the lead singer for Project 86). I can honestly say that, above everything else, I am a music fan, and if it wasn't for discovering new music, I would be a different person. There is not much else that can compare on this side of eternity to the first time you hear a song or a band that you connect with. That feeling is what fuels the search.

Today we happen to live in a very interesting, opportunistic time for the music fan. Though we have access to thousands of artists via the Web, the age-old question remains: Where can I find music that is both spiritually sound *and* good? I am tempted to end that paragraph with one word: "Here." But I'm not that audacious. I'd rather just say something a little more realistic: Here, every month, I am going to do my very best to play that friend I mentioned above. That being said...

Project 86 (from left): Randy Torres, ANDREW SCHWAB and Steven Dail

EISLEY

Eisley just finished work on its sophomore major label release, the follow-up to 2005's *Room Noises* (Warner/Reprise), heralded as one of the "prettiest and strangest" records of the new millennium. The follow-up album—still untitled at press time—may hit stores as quickly as late May. This five-piece band is known for "keeping it in the family"—four siblings and a best friend comprise the outfit, whose version of indie pop is akin to Meg & Dia and The Fray. Looking for dreamy? Look no further: **eisley.com**.

JEREMY ENIGK

Jeremy Enigk, most notably immortalized with his former outfit Sunny Day Real Estate, has taken a hiatus from his band The Fire Theft to release his second solo full length titled *World Waits*. The album was released through his own label, Lewis Hollow Recordings. With a voice like no other, this ambient collection of acoustic, folk, singer/songwriter and keyboard-driven indie rock is a must have. Enigk is a legend in emo circles, as his former band is most often noted as the act that started the genre itself. Check out **myspace.com/jeremyenigk** and **lewishollow.com** for more info.

THE TIDE

Unsigned and undaunted, Grand Rapids' The Tide not only boasts that "If Coldplay is the new U2, then The Tide is the new Coldplay," on its MySpace page, but also has one of the most hilarious videos I have ever seen. In the clip, which is for a track on the band's self-released full-length *Oh My God I'm Not Free*, The Tide performs in diapers. This compelling group has the sound to back the audacity. As lustrous and vibrant as the Mute Maths of the world, hinting at twinges of The Cure, Sunny Day Real Estate and, of course, Coldplay, The Tide won't be label-less for long. Find out why at **myspace.com/thetideband**.

Ruth (from left): Dustin Ruth, Reid Van Atta, Nick Wiinikka and Justin Schiermeister

RUTH

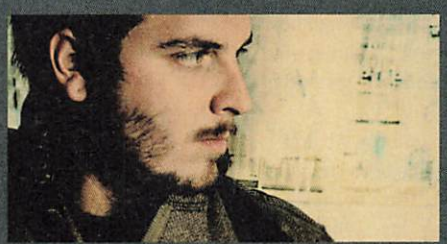
***The subject of this month's "Flashlight" section is Battle Ground, Washington's* RUTH**. These four melodic rockers signed to Tooth & Nail in 2006 and immediately found themselves in position "A" in almost every way. With a forthcoming debut album (*Second Hand Dreaming*) produced by wizard Aaron Sprinkle (Jeremy Camp, Anberlin, MxPx) and a long list of great tours (including Seventh Day Slumber last month and Falling Up this month), Ruth is set up for an immediate impact. And you will never meet a more pleasant bunch of dudes.

"The mission statement for the band is to encourage people to look in the right direction for hope in our lives," states front man and songwriter Dustin Ruth. "The album title expands on this idea... It means if we seek the Lord first, He will give us the desires of our hearts. We just want to delight in Him."

Second Hand Dreaming is rich in texture and melody, with influences stretching from The Wallflowers to Oasis to Third Eye Blind. This is a record of accessible, melodic, rock songs with taste and class. It is genuine in emotion and rich in real-life references. And the down side? *Second Hand Dreaming* doesn't hit stores until next month—June 26. However, you can purchase the six-song *Ruth EP* now at **ruthrock.com**.

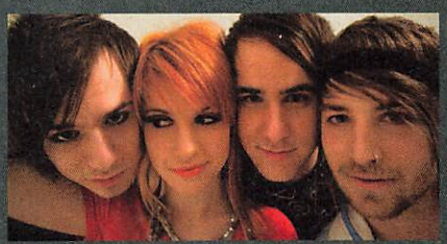
STILL REMAINS

Still Remains—who, like The Tide, is from Grand Rapids—just finished recording its sophomore effort, *The Serpent* (Roadrunner), which was produced by Steve Evets (Story of the Year, He Is Legend). The record is due out this summer and will most certainly expand on the band's brutal metalcore sound. Still Remains has just been confirmed for the Smartpunk stage on the "Vans Warped Tour" for the entire month of August. Fans of Norma Jean, As I Lay Dying, etc., will certainly find much to celebrate here. Go to **stillremains.com** to find out more.



DUSTIN KENSRUE

Dustin Kensrue, vocalist for the seminal post-hardcore band Thrice, recently announced that five percent of all proceeds from his debut solo release, *Please Come Home,* will be donated to the organization To Write Love on Her Arms. TWLOHA is a nonprofit group that raises funds for awareness and treatment of addiction, depression, self-injury and suicide. This acoustic collection of singer/songwriter material is quite uplifting and lyrically outstanding. It falls in the wake of Bob Dylan and Johnny Cash. Find out more at **dustinkensrue.com** and **twloha.com**.



PARAMORE

The female-fronted emo pop band Paramore has just finished its sophomore release for Fueled By Ramen Records. *Riot* will hit stores next month. This compelling quartet surges with life and energy and doesn't need to scream to do it fashionably. The band will be headlining dates on the "Warped Tour" this summer and will be on the road with The Almost (featuring Underoath's Aaron Gillespie). Paramore's music is for fans of Anberlin and Emery. Go to **paramore.net** for details.

Andrew Schwab is the lead vocalist and lyricist for the band Project 86. He is also the author of three books, as well as an independent journalist. Visit him online at **myCCM.org/andrewschwab**, **andrewschwab.com** and **project86.com**

"OH BOY..."

For a year now, I have tried to shield you from my obsession with my 3 year old. It's a daily exercise in self-restraint for most parents not to blab about the perfection of our offspring. No one really cares how Karate Kevin lost his first tooth or how Home School Helen is doing in long division. But this month...well...I humbly admit failure.

Charlie is...as they like to say...*all* boy. I remember going to get our sonogram. We really wanted to know the gender of the baby, and I held my breath while our doctor carefully moved that cold device over my growing belly. Within seconds he declared, "Wow! A very definite boy!"

Suddenly, I was hit with a flood of premonitions about stinky gym socks and burping contests.

Charlie is indeed, all boy. He has two speeds: sprinting or sleeping. Two volumes: yelling or hollering. Favorite car? Hummer. Sport? Hockey. Instrument? Drums, of course. The Energizer bunny on steroids. Going...and going...and going.

Imagine then, my surprise, when I picked him up from his little school yesterday and found him dissolving into inconsolably big, gulping sobs. I sat on the floor and held him, trying to decipher what had happened. "If one of these kids laid a finger on him," I silently decided, "I will take a carton of eggs to whichever SUV his mom drives." (Motherhood has really matured me).

Finally, his teacher explained that the kids had been playing dress up, and Charlie had decided to wear the princess dress, but when it came time to put it away...the meltdown ensued...and was now continuing in my lap.

"I want to be a princess, Mommy!!!"

Suddenly, I was acutely aware of all the other mothers in the room, gathering their boys and backpacks. I could feel their glances of pity and silent relief that they weren't the ones having to pry their hysterical sons out of pink taffeta.

I considered the eggs again.

Then I began the desperate bargaining. "Ice cream?" "Lollipops?" "Let's go buy a Hummer, sweetie. Daddy won't care." Finally, his teacher offered, "Charlie, why don't you just take that princess dress home and borrow it overnight?" Instantly, he brightened and through swollen eyes, "That OK, Mom?"

It was one of those parenting moments nobody prepares you for. At first I thought, 'This is a good opportunity to help explain how God made boys and girls different and that boys don't really wear princess dresses because... um...because...let's see...because...it's wrong? No. Because it's weird? No. Because everybody knows trucks are cooler than dresses? Lame.'

Unable to find a real reason, I scooped up Charlie and the dress and announced rather loudly that I had *just* the perfect lip gloss at home to match.

As we walked in the door at home, he was beaming. "I can not *wait* to show Daddy how beautiful I am." Thankfully, I married a guy who is totally secure with his own masculinity and predictably didn't skip a beat, "My goodness! Aren't *you* gorgeous!" I mouthed a quick "thank you" and followed the princess upstairs in search of that lip gloss.

Later that night, I replayed the events in my head—specifically the part where I was paralyzed by choosing either to teach a lesson about what's appropriate or choosing to participate in Charlie's imagination and joy. I knew immediately that I was far more motivated by the (imagined) judgment of the other mothers than anything else. It wasn't about Charlie and the dress. Not for a second did I think that pretending to be a princess for the afternoon would leave some confusing gender scar on his psyche. It was about my fear of someone else's perception, and I almost let my insecurity and embarrassment rob me of one of my all-time favorite memories—a princess party with my son—complete with twirling and curtsy lessons.

"WE BOW AND BUCKLE TO THE PRESSURE OF WHO WE ARE EXPECTED TO BE... AT WORK, IN RELATIONSHIPS, AT CHURCH... AND WE DIMINISH, WITH GREAT CARE, THE PARTS OF US THAT MIGHT NOT EXACTLY MEASURE UP."

We do that, you know. Every day.

We bow and buckle to the pressure of who we are expected to be...at work, in relationships, at church...and we diminish, with great care, the parts of us that might not exactly measure up. I wonder if God isn't deeply saddened by every calculated, safe decision that shapes our lives. I wonder if He doesn't shake His head at how profoundly motivated we are by the suffocating expectations of others. I wonder how much joy we miss out on when we choose dignity over freedom.

I am a student.

And yesterday, my teacher was a 3-year-old boy in a pink dress, who handed me a pop quiz that I hadn't yet studied for...but might just have passed.

The new album, *Recollection: The Best of Nichole Nordeman* (Sparrow), features two new songs, including the current hit single "Sunrise." Visit Nichole online at **myCCM.org/nicholenordeman** and **nicholenordeman.com**.

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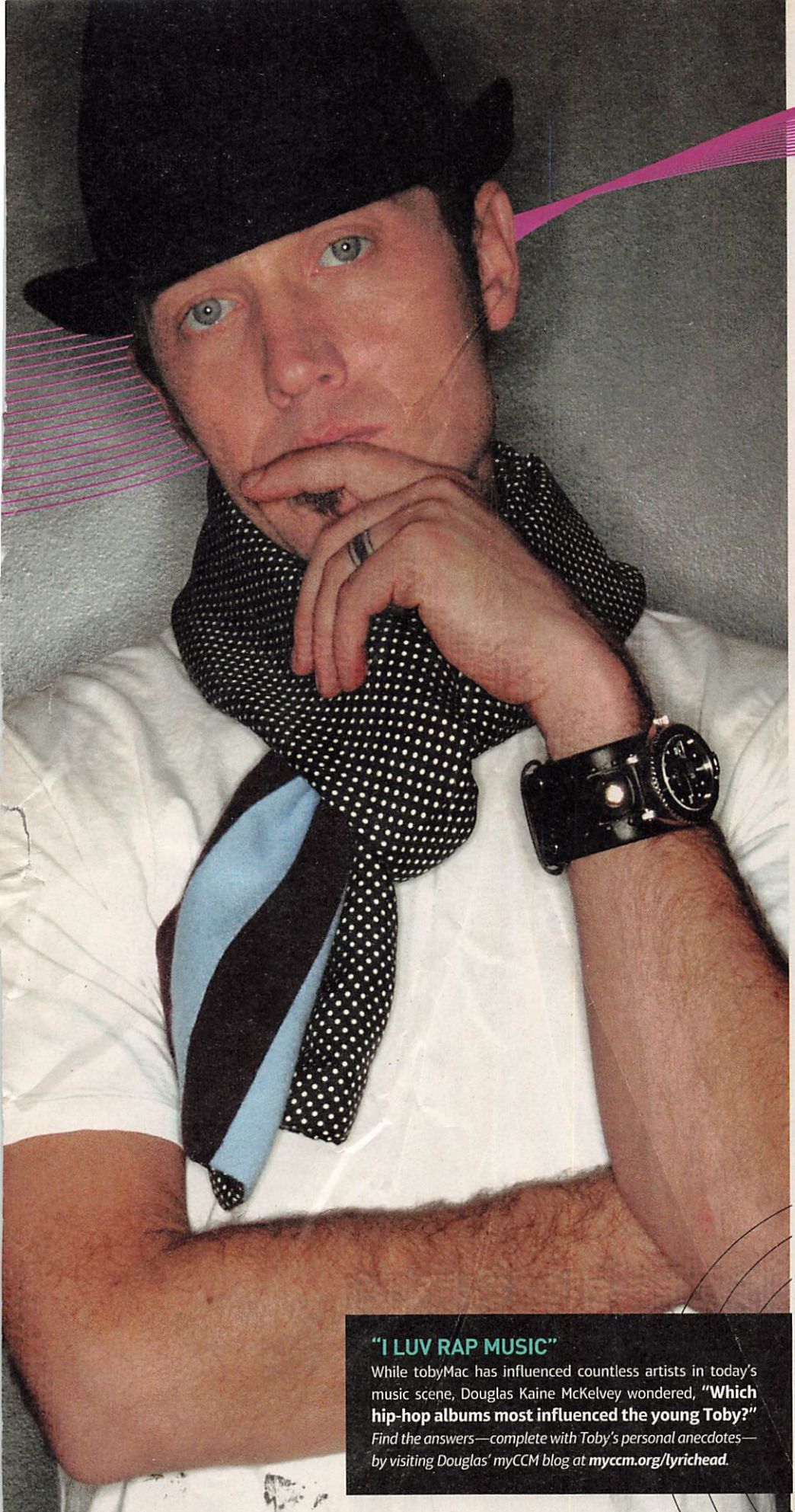

Technically, he might not qualify as a renaissance man since he doesn't seem to be doing much to advance the frontiers of mechanical engineering and mathematical theory, but all the same, tobyMac's a pretty talented, pretty busy, multifaceted guy. From business to production to artistry to advocacy to philanthropy, he's had a hand in much of the movings and shakings going on in recent years, not just in terms of what we hear on the radio, but in terms of the larger, evangelical church-shaping conversation as well.

And while he's one of the most genial, unassuming and genuinely friendly multi-Platinum artist/moguls you're likely to ever meet, at Toby's core is a bit of a bulldog who's unwilling to compromise the things he believes are of fundamental importance. So whether it's a question of passion vs. commerce, family vs. career or racial reconciliation vs. the status quo, Toby is all about making conscious choices and leaning into the art, the life, the culture, the journey, come what may. He'll push; he'll inspire; and, as his music suggests, he'd also like to celebrate a little along the way if you don't mind, because, after all, isn't history moving toward one really big party?

The recent release of Toby's third—and fastest-selling—solo project, *Portable Sounds* (ForeFront), finds him once again set loose in a playground of current hip-hop and alt-pop influences. But it also finds him passionately articulating for the umpteenth time, in case some of us don't quite get it yet, some of those same core themes that have long been his mission, including the emphatic "love thy neighbor."

Portable Sounds is, in fact, bookended by cuts that evidence that passion. The opener, "One World" is a straightforward, welcoming invitation to lay down the prejudices that divide us and, in light of the coming great reconciliation we claim to believe God is drawing all of history toward, to begin to live our lives as reconcilers now. The closing cut, "Lose My Soul" simply stands as good evidence of the way that reconciling vision works its way into every aspect of Toby's life and art. The track, which features Kirk Franklin and "American Idol" luminary Mandisa, is Toby's wrenchingly honest prayer to stay true to the main narrative in his life. The subtext of the track, though, is the two-way-street of Toby and Kirk's friendship and mutual commitment to cooperatively build bridges between "black music and white music." Which, of course, isn't really so much about the music as it is about finding ways to bridge some of the long-standing rifts between white and African-American believers.

Because racial reconciliation and the appreciation of diversity have remained front and center for Toby

"I LUV RAP MUSIC"

While tobyMac has influenced countless artists in today's music scene, Douglas Kaine McKelvey wondered, **"Which hip-hop albums most influenced the young Toby?"** *Find the answers—complete with Toby's personal anecdotes—by visiting Douglas' myCCM blog at* ***myccm.org/lyrichead.***

for more than 15 years, we decided to dig a little deeper into the subject.

"My passion for reconciliation was rooted in how I grew up," he says, though it took him a while to realize not everyone shared his privileged upbringing. Of course, when Toby speaks of a "privileged upbringing" he's not referring to a posh crib and an Ivy League education. He's talking about a richness of diversity in relationship and the things you take for granted at Luther Jackson Intermediate School in the D.C. suburbs.

"It was interesting to be in a bi-racial group," he says, referring to his years in dcTalk, "and to travel the nation opening for early Christian pioneering rock bands and rarely see a black face in the audience for years... I started to understand that not all people had the experiences I grew up with. Not everyone got to see the beauty in their fifth grade class of having three Asian people, two Latinos, three black people and eight white people. Not everyone had that."

tobyMac's RAP SHEET

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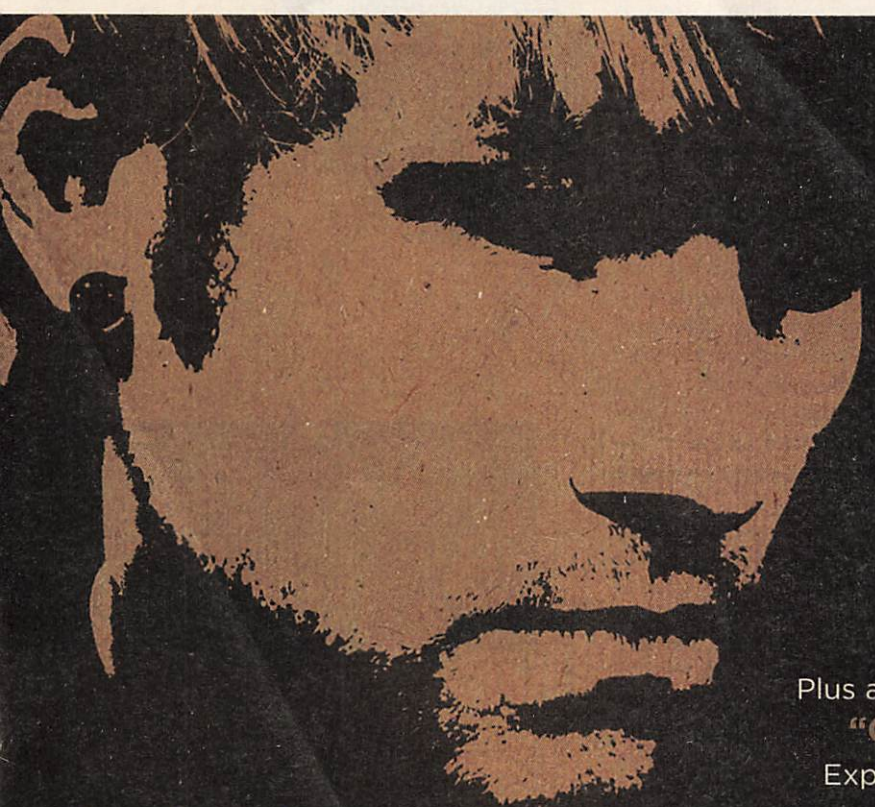
Add to that the additional monikers of label president (Gotee), co-founder of the E.R.A.C.E. Foundation, co-author of two books and husband and father of five kids. Oh, and in the case of this cover story, three interviews deftly sandwiched around band rehearsals, writing sessions, weekend tour dates and family time. In fact, the last interview ended just a few hours before Toby's tour bus was scheduled to roll out of Franklin, Tennessee, officially kicking off the "*Portable Sounds* Tour." The session ended promptly at 4:30 because Toby needed to get home to have dinner with his family, play with his kids Truett (8), twins Moses & Marlee (4), Leo (2), and Judah (1), read them a story and tuck them into bed before he kissed his Jamaican bride, Amanda, goodbye and hopped the magical midnight bus for Somewhereville. ***D.K.M.***



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While national touring offered Toby firsthand observation of the "by default" segregation of much of Christianity and began to awaken a sense that something wasn't quite right, it was a jolting incident on board an airplane in the early '90s that finally spurred him to devote a significant amount of energy to reconciliation advocacy.

"[dcTalk co-vocalist Michael] Tait and I had sat together laughing and having a great time this whole flight," Toby remembers. "When we landed, Tait got up out of his seat and began to walk down the aisle. I was getting my bag from the overhead bin when this big guy behind me grabbed my shoulder. He looked me in the eye and said, 'N----r lover.'

"I just looked at him. It blew my mind. I had never heard anything that direct... That's when I started writing songs about it."

In short order, the writing of songs led to further action, like the 1994 formation of Gotee Records which has a track record of being, pound for pound, one of the most racially diverse labels around. And even more specifically, the formation three years later of the E.R.A.C.E. (Eliminating Racism And Creating Equality) Foundation which has hosted concerts and forums on college campuses and donated substantial amounts of funding to individuals and organizations positioned on the front lines of racial reconciliation work.

"In our band, we would sit around on the bus and just talk about coming from different socio-economic levels, different parents, different races, different cultures, different parts of the nation; and we just find it so interesting," Toby says. "And we thought, 'The world needs to talk more like this. Then they would find out that, although we're different, our differences are interesting; and if we just communicate about them, the myths go away. You begin to see who that person really is, and not be so intimidated or judgmental."

When the E.R.A.C.E. Foundation tried to replicate those dynamic tour bus dialogues amongst college students though, the results were mixed. "It was interesting," Toby recalls. "People want to shy away from that subject. They're uncomfortable with it. People felt it was negativity. It wasn't, but people felt that, like they were being pushed—I just heard a lady talking about racism on the radio yesterday, and she said, 'Why do we need to stir all that up?' And I was like, 'Ah man, she just doesn't get it, that we have to talk about it.' [With E.R.A.C.E.] I thought you could talk about it by pushing a little bit. But the other thing you can do is inspire people, and I think that's where the 'Diverse City' concept came from."

First a T-Shirt slogan, then an album title and finally adopted as the name of Toby's very diverse band (Incidentally, Toby and that band are now five songs deep into the recording of a collaborative "Diverse City" album project), the term "Diverse City" has really come to be an overarching concept, a goal, an articulation of Toby's passion to see the church more fully reflect the glory of God by embracing and loving the beautiful diversity within it.

His cousin Joey Elwood, likewise a co-founder of Gotee Records and the E.R.A.C.E. Foundation, offers a personal and historical perspective on Toby's efforts. "I think [racial reconciliation] is as big a part of Toby's life now as it was the day he came to Nashville," he says, "but I think rather than facing the issue with his intellect—reading books, essays, political commentaries, etc.—I think wisdom is more the path he's treading these days. He's tackling the problem through a different lens than in years past.

"As believers, we know racial reconciliation is 'inside' the bigger idea of reconciling our hearts to Christ, where profound behavioral change comes," Elwood continues. "...What I'm most proud of with Toby on this issue is he's more concerned with the eternal ramifications than the social ones. However, his compassion has never let him devalue the fact that people are hurting, and he's willing to lend his platform to it—instigating whatever change can come through legal, social or political awareness, while never losing sight that curing the virus is much more important than curing the cough."

From the ethnic makeup of Toby's band and label roster to his marriage to his Jamaican wife, Amanda, to his adoption of two mixed-race children to his longtime relationships with people like Kirk Franklin, Toby has naturally and unselfconsciously been about the business of appreciating, embracing and building bridges between various cultures, sub-cultures and races. "I understand philosophically what people mean when they say they're colorblind," Toby says, "but I think what we really need is to learn to appreciate each other's cultures, the colors of our skin, the differences each of us brings to a group of people. Let me put it another way. Would I want to say that black gospel shouldn't exist anymore because we should come together? No, 'cuz that's a rich tradition that I enjoy and I love. Those differences are what make us beautiful together. Not pretending we're all alike, but embracing the fact that we all have different shades of skin, and we feel and respond to things differently. I think there's a time when we even have to be willing to have the kinds of conversations where we're asking questions of one another that, in the short run, can stir up feelings of anger and bitterness...sometimes you have to stir that up before the healing begins."

For any personal relationship to work, sooner or later people are going to have to break their silence and talk about some difficult and potentially painful things. They might even have to argue in public. But if it's done in the context of grace and commitment, Toby believes, the result is greater trust, deeper appreciation, fuller understanding and a stronger relationship. Having tasted that in his own ethnically diverse church and network of relationships, Toby holds out the same hope for the Body of Christ. After all, he believes it is a party, and everyone should be invited.

"It's pretty simple," he says. "When you build on separate foundations that began with slavery, and you look up 150 years later, this is where we are. To love well now means to get out of our comfort zones a little and begin to embrace people from other races and cultures... We're not as far apart as we think we are. I'm gonna be the optimist on this one. I see youth culture [within the church] sort of pushing and the older generation following, and I see us going out into the world and in the midst of different races. It looks more diverse. I think the walls are coming down and insulated Christendom is falling away." CCM

__Douglas Kaine McKelvey__ has penned four published books, crafted lyrics for more than 130 recorded songs, and launched __lyrichead.com__ and __myCCM.org/lyrichead.__

> "...I THINK WHAT WE REALLY NEED IS **TO LEARN TO APPRECIATE EACH OTHER'S CULTURES**, THE COLORS OF OUR SKIN, THE DIFFERENCES EACH OF US BRINGS TO A GROUP OF PEOPLE."

BLEEDING INTO ONE

WHEN WE ENCOUNTERED TOBYMAC'S CURRENT PERSPECTIVE ON RACE AND RECONCILIATION, OUR EDITOR WAS COMPELLED TO BLOG ABOUT IT—HE ASKED *CCM* READERS WHAT THEY THINK ABOUT THE STATE OF THE CHURCH TODAY AND WHAT STEPS THE CHURCH NEEDS TO TAKE TO LIVE IN TRUE COMMUNITY. HERE ARE SOME EXCERPTS FROM THE THOUGHT-PROVOKING FEEDBACK:

I think that white and black churches are separated largely due to a difference in tastes and styles of worship and preaching. I also think that the church has done a poor job of accepting others that are different from them. That is one large problem churches have—judging and not accepting people not like them. It's a sad thing because we are commanded to love our neighbors as ourselves. That is the second greatest commandment, according to Jesus.
***Justin Owens**, Rome, GA*

It is very discouraging to me to have such a distance between the black and white churches today. One of the main reasons I see for this division is the conservative nature of many Christians. Things change very slowly in the church. We don't encourage progression. We like to keep things safe and comfortable. Our comfort zones are often defined by human reasoning instead of the wisdom of God… In order to move past these prejudices, we have to acknowledge that we still hold them. Then we must ask forgiveness from those we have excluded and be willing to forgive those who have excluded us.
***Mark Mardis**, Chattanooga, TN*

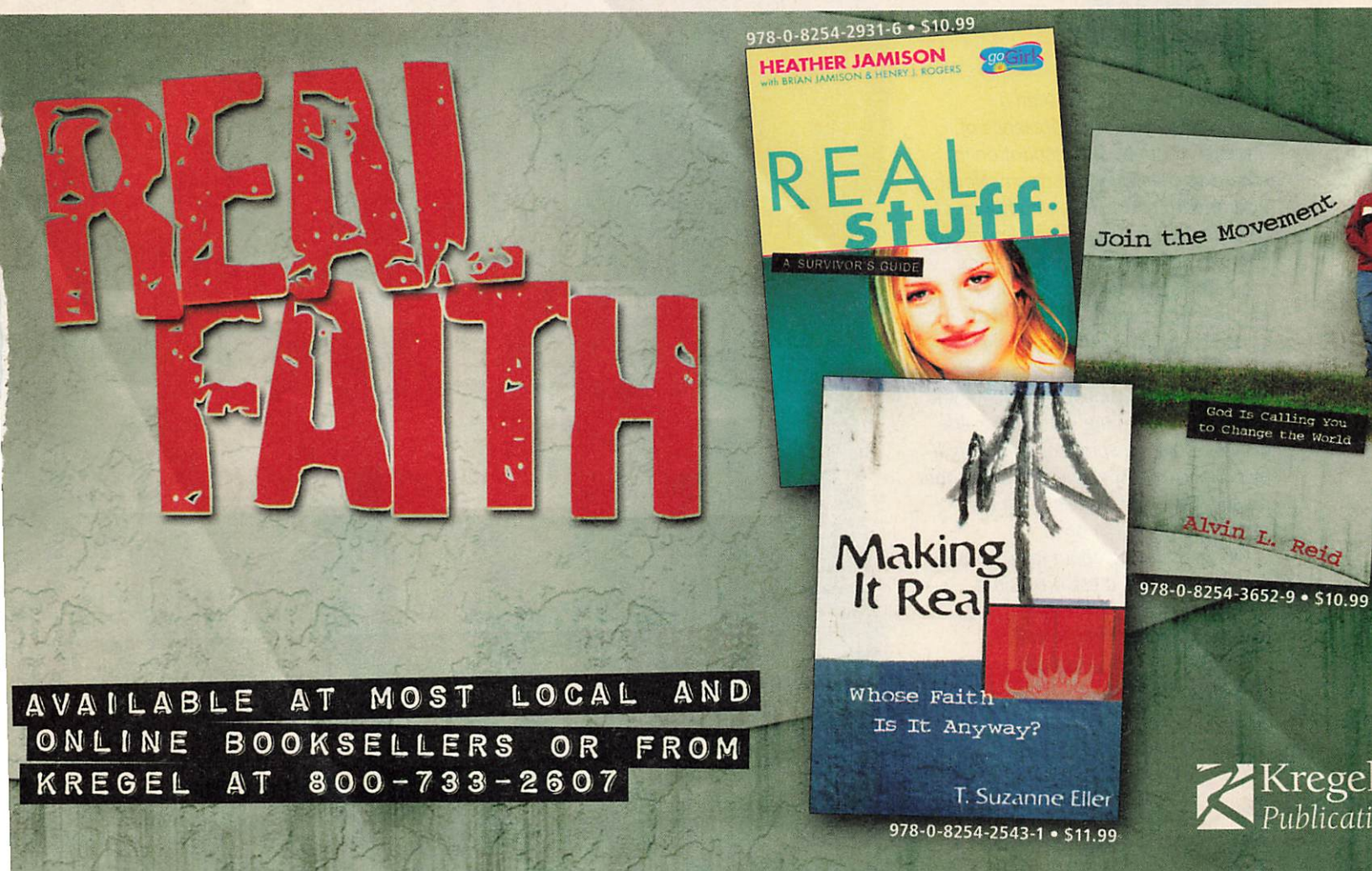
I think the greatest possibility we have to racially integrate is to bring hip-hop music into the churches, because this is music that seems to cross all racial lines… If a church wants to be multi-racial, it generally has to be an intentional project of the congregation; I don't think it would happen naturally. I talked to someone from a church in St. Louis where the people were so committed to starting a racially-integrated church that they moved out of their suburban homes, into inner city areas, lived with the people there, and in that way built a racially-integrated congregation.
***J. Lee Harshbarger**, Ypsilanti, Michigan*
myccm.org/bananaleaf

I can vouch for many Christians—and churches—in my own community to be God's genuine people who reach out to others, and race is not an issue… I cannot explain why churches "segregate," except to say that I believe there might be somewhat of a cultural difference. It seems more like an issue of preferences, rather than racism. I don't think that it's always a case of racial segregation.
***Debbie B.**, Ottawa, IL*

I think the problem is actually bigger than black and white. How many prominently white churches do you see an Asian, Hispanic, Native American or Middle Eastern presence at? …As a worship leader, I know music is one of the most important attractions/turn-offs at most churches. We worship leaders need to embrace the prominent music styles in our culture today as a means of outreach. The key is making your set list as stylistically diverse as the cultures you are trying to reach—try playing some of your church's favorite songs in a different style. I've found that experimenting a little bit with things as simple as tempo or vocal style can not only stretch a song's mass appeal, but it can also do wonders as far as breathing life into your worship team.
***Mark Davies**, Oregon City, OR*

What do you think?

Email Feedback@CCMmagazine.com.



SALT and LIGHT IN A GRAY WORLD

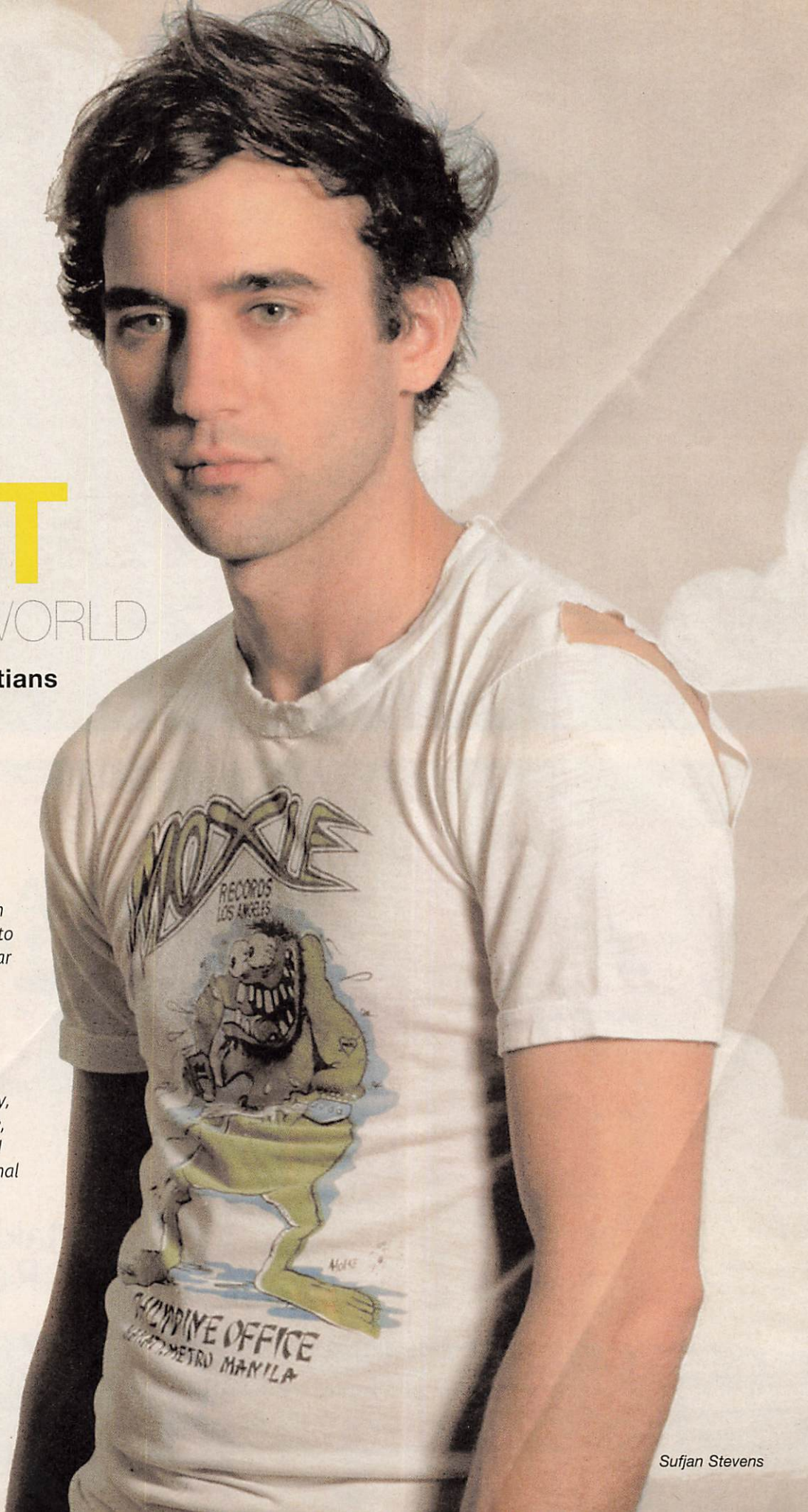
A Fan's Guide to Christians in the General Market

(part one)

The last few years have seen a consistently increasing presence of Christian thought and inspiration in America's musical mainstream. Month after month new artists who happen to be Christians are making an impact far outside the borders of the Christian marketplace. In some cases every member of a band is a committed Christian, while in others, it is the bandleader or principal songwriter that brings the influence. Terminology, labels and marketing strategies aside, artists who are inspired and informed by a Biblical perspective and a personal pursuit of God are challenging the presumptions of the past.

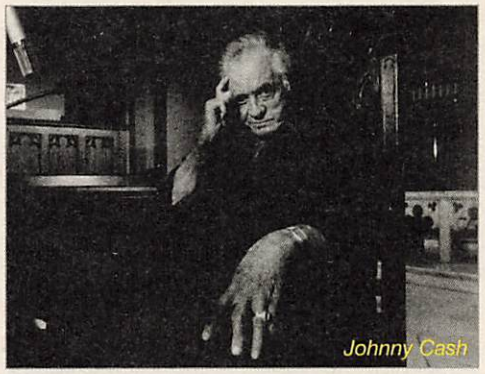
Whether writing about love, faith, politics or ethics, these artists are calling it like they see it. Just don't call them "A Christian Band."

By John J. Thompson



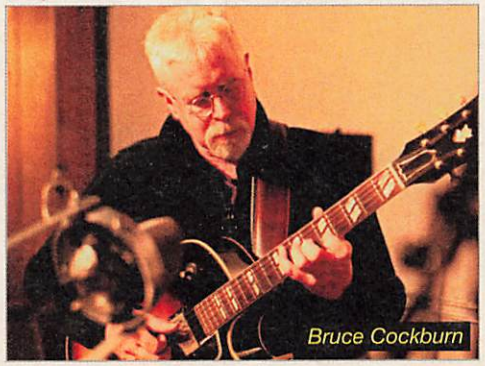
Sufjan Stevens

Augustana


Johnny Cash

Cold War Kids

As I Lay Dying


Bruce Cockburn

Alice Cooper

Augustana | augustanamusic.com

The members of indie rockers Augustana joined together at the evangelical Greenville College before being signed by Sony Records a few years back. After years of touring and some serious traction for their single "Boston," guitarist Josiah Rosen left the band and is working on an indie Americana project called *The Last Almanac*.

As I Lay Dying | asilaydying.com

Metalheads As I Lay Dying might be the most outspoken Christians never to have been signed to a Christian record label. Not only has their faith not hurt their mainstream success, but it actually seems to endear the band to hardcore fans in a counter-cultural rebellious kind of way. Unafraid to be upfront about their beliefs, and brutal in their delivery, the San Diego boys just earn more cred and respect.

Daniel & Natasha Bedingfield

danielbedingfield.com, natashabedingfield.com

Siblings Daniel and Natasha Bedingfield have been tearing up radio charts around the world, and increasingly here in the States, while never shying away from their Christian backgrounds. Daniel sang backing vocals on Delirious' *World Service* (Sparrow) album a few years back, and Natasha wrote and recorded worship songs for Hillsong London's *Shout God's Fame* (Integrity) and other specifically Christian projects. Their parents were missionaries, and their continuing faith is demonstrated by their role as ambassadors for the Global Network, a children's ministry founded by their mother.

T-Bone Burnett | tboneburnett.com

T-Bone Burnett has been impacting the culture as a songwriter, producer and band member since the early 1970s in ways few other artists ever will. From his days as a member of Bob Dylan's Rolling Thunder Review, to a string of rare, but amazing solo albums, and most recently his role as musical director on major films such as *O Brother Where Art Thou* and *Cold Mountain*, Burnett brings his faith with him in a deeply passionate and always challenging way. Burnett, who's also a former *CCM* contributing writer, captured the basic nature of the "Christians in Culture" conundrum when he said, "You can sing about the Light, or you can sing about what you see because of the Light. I prefer the latter."

Johnny Cash | johnnycash.com

In "A Final Interview" with Lev Grossman, American icon Johnny Cash summed it up perfectly. "I'm an artist who is a Christian," he said. "I'm not a Christian artist." Cash's frequently dark country music explored the depths of human despair and the heights of transcendent love, often in the same song. Earning the respect of several generations of artists from every conceivable background, Johnny Cash certainly ranks among the most significant faith-fueled artists of the last century.

Bruce Cockburn | brucecockburn.com

Canadian singer/songwriter Bruce Cockburn is certainly one of the most influential modern folk artists of the last 30 years. His clearly faith-informed worldview is steeped in a passion for social justice and the pursuit of true inner peace in a world gone wrong. Though rarely involved in the Christian marketplace, Cockburn has not shied away from talking about his faith in interviews or in his songs. In 1993, his acclaimed Christmas album was distributed into the Christian market, as was his 1979 classic *Dancing In The Dragon's Jaws* (Columbia/Myrrh).

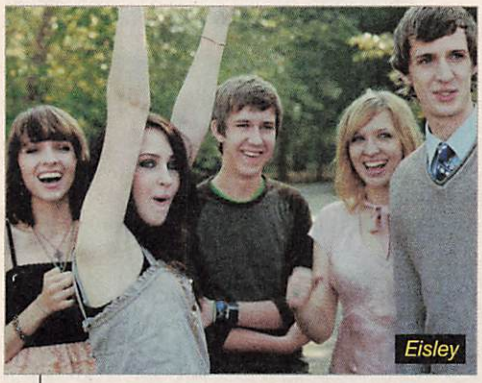
Cold War Kids | coldwarkids.com

The Los Angeles-based band Cold War Kids has been dismissing the "Christian band" tag since indie scene gatekeepers like Pitchfork Media started outing them last year. It should come as no surprise that their songs are strongly informed by a Christian worldview—after all, three of the Kids' four members attended Biola University, and guitarist Jonathan Russell's father is an evangelical pastor.

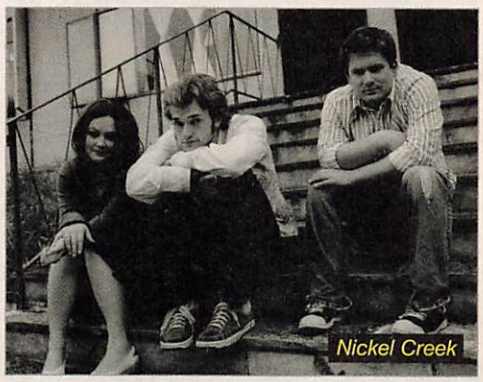
Copeland

The Innocence Mission

Lovedrug


Eisley

The Fray


Nickel Creek

Alice Cooper | alicecooper.com

Shock rocker Alice Cooper turned heads in the '60s and '70s with his wild makeup and theatrical live shows, but he really upset the rock & roll apple cart when he embraced Christianity in the late 1980s. While being personally mentored by theologian R.C. Sproul, Cooper remained quiet about his faith for several years. During the past 12 years, however, Cooper has referenced it openly in interviews and has produced five albums that add a subversively Christian twist to his uniquely satirical fare.

Copeland | thecopelandsite.com

In a 2005 interview with scene stars.net Aaron Marsh, of the increasingly hot modern pop band Copeland, got very frank about the band's faith, and its bypassing the Christian marketplace. "We are Christians, but we're not gonna be in the scene," he said. Later in the interview he continued: "We play rock music, it's not 'Christian rock.' I'm glad to have fans who have similar beliefs; I appreciate it. But you have to know that we make music for everyone, not just Christians."

Eisley | eisley.com

"We always use the analogy that if you're a Christian and you're a painter, you don't just paint pictures of Jesus." So says Eisley vocalist Sherri DuPree in an interview with The Phantom Tollbooth (tollbooth.org). Despite the dreamy alternative band's strong sense

of faith and family, it rejected numerous offers to sign with Christian labels and, instead, landed with Warner Bros. where Eisley continues to rack up mainstream accolades and opportunities.

The Fray | thefray.net

Isaac Slade, front man for the piano rock band The Fray has no problem copping to his faith, but "we don't call ourselves a Christian band," he told *USA Today* last year. "Because when you get into marketing, 'Christian' means that you have everything together, and you're always happy, and you want everybody to start going to your church... If we have an agenda, it's to make art that is honest and represents what we believe in." The Fray's multi-format hit, "How to Save a Life," is currently climbing Christian pop radio's AC chart (No. 21 at press time) according to *Christian Radio & Retail Weekly*.

The Innocence Mission

theinnocencemission.com

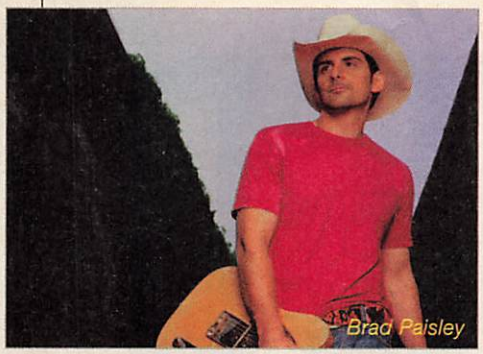
Lancaster, Pennsylvania, artists The Innocence Mission have been walking the line for 20 years, releasing some of the most graceful and eloquent music of the last several decades, with their Christian faith latent. In an interview with truetunes.com, co-founder Don Paris seemed pretty ambivalent about the issue: "I guess we sort of thought that if people are buying our records that they are at least aware that we are people of faith, and we were hoping that this wouldn't be alienating."

Lovedrug | lovedrugmusic.com

The piano-driven rock of Lovedrug is earning attention throughout the indie scene, while the band's lyrics strike a special chord with believers. Lovedrug has bumped up against the Christian market here and there, and will appear at this summer's Cornerstone Festival, but they "have no agenda." As *Ink 19* asked lead singer/guitarist Michael Shepard, "Is Lovedrug a Christian band? Your last band, Kerith Ravine, was clearly fueled by a dedication to their Christianity." He responded, "No, not technically. Not everyone in the band is a Christian."

Nickel Creek | nickelcreek.com

Nickel Creek's bluegrass-tinged sound has made them a huge hit within the country and Americana scenes, and it'd be doubtful any of their success could have happened in the Christian music underground. "We're all Christians," vocalist and mandolin player Chris Thine told CMT.com, "although we're not a Christian band, per se. The most important thing to us is that we feel that we've been given a gift from God of being able to perform and to record for people. We basically just want to use that gift as we feel God would have us use it."

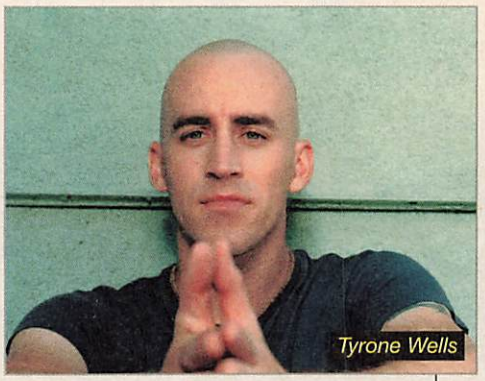

Brad Paisley

U2

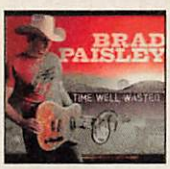
Thrice

Sherwood

Rosie Thomas


Tyrone Wells

Brad Paisley | bradpaisley.com



One of the most successful country artists of the past decade has been Brad Paisley. With a traditional sound and some of the best guitar chops in the industry, Paisley stays true to the music, and to his personal faith. One of the most popular artists working today, Paisley contributed the stunning "New Again" duet with Sara Evans for *The Passion of The Christ: Songs* (EMI) CD. His hit single "When I Get Where I'm Going" is also covered by Christian music veteran Geoff Moore on his latest release, *Speak to Me* (Rocketown).

Sherwood | myspace.com/sherwood

After rising to success in the indie scene via projects affiliated with The Militia Group and TruePunk.com, dance rock band Sherwood landed a deal with the newly formed MySpace Records label. The band hit the road this spring with Relient K and is doing its best to reach out to a Christian audience without limiting itself to the Christian marketplace.

Sufjan Stevens | sufjan.com

It's likely that no other faith-based artist has made a bigger impact in the modern alternative music scene over the last few years than the super hip indie darling Sufjan Stevens. Though his lyrics frequently and clearly approach the world from his Christian perspective, Stevens avoids the actual Christian music scene. That said, he returned as a headlining performer and lecturer for the Festival of Faith & Music at Grand Rapids' evangelical Calvin College in March. [Look for a feature story on this year's festival in next month's *CCM*.] In addition to his own music, Stevens has frequently joined forces with label mates Danielson.

Rosie Thomas | rosiethomas.com

Singer/songwriter Rosie Thomas came to faith while attending a Christian college. Her soulful songs are finding an audience coast to coast. In a recent interview with Christianitytoday.com, Thomas explained that her faith is at the center of everything she does. "When I write, the most important thing to me is to leave hope in it. God puts it on my heart to use sorrow to find the bright side. I've gotta go through the depths to reach the sincerity. Run the race and finish it—everything will be fine."

Thrice | thrice.net

Most of the members of hard rock band Thrice are believers, and the influence shows up throughout their work. But in a recent interview for modernfix.com front man Dustin Kensrue made it clear that they were not a "Christian band." "Yeah, some of us are Christians, but in no way is Thrice a 'Christian band.' Someone was making a good analogy the other day that if a Christian paints an abstract picture of a tomato, is that a 'Christian painting'? Obviously not. It's an abstract painting done by a person who calls himself a Christian."

Tyrone Wells | tyronewells.com

Tyrone Wells was the soulful vocalist for the Word Records signed rock band Skypark for several years before going solo and eventually landing with Universal South. Wells, who is touring with Leigh Nash this year, had enough experience in the Christian market to know that, in order to accomplish what he felt called to, he needed to focus his efforts on the general market.

U2 | u2.com

Of course no conversation about Christians in the mainstream music scene is complete without mentioning the enormously influential band that literally defined the potential that exists for artists of faith to impact the culture. For nearly two decades, Christian music enthusiasts knew U2 as a band comprised of "three believers and an agnostic." But with bassist Adam Clayton's eventual conversion to Christianity, spirituality permeated U2 in a new way. Now 30 years into their run, U2 is more comfortable in their skin as people of faith and as culture shapers than they ever have been. Bono, especially, rarely misses an opportunity to contextualize his passion for social justice in terms of his Christian faith. CCM

Think we're overlooking someone? Write us at ***feedback@CCMmagazine.com****, and let us know who you think we should highlight and why. And look for Part Two of this guide in next month's* CCM.

John J. Thompson *has at various times been—and is occasionally now—an artist, author, pastor, music journalist and industry veteran. He founded True Tunes and Gyroscope Arts and is currently in the process of moving his family to Nashville. Visit* ***JohnJThompson.com*** *and* ***myCCM.org/JJT****.*

HAUNTED by fame

The difficulty for independent artist **Candi Pearson-Shelton** is more and more people are discovering who she is. **By Jackie A. Chapman**

Candi Pearson-Shelton wishes to remain anonymous. The problem is, her name is likely recognized by tens of thousands of people.

Lead worshipper, songwriter and indie artist Pearson-Shelton first appeared before crowds in the early days of the Passion college movement. She and fellow worship leader Steve Fee fronted a Passion campus tour in 1999-2000, reaching 126 college campuses. Pearson-Shelton then appeared on *Passion: Sacred Revolution–Songs from OneDay03*, leading "Sing to the King," and she and her husband Jonathan served as community group leaders and performed Late Night concerts for Passion '05, '06 and '07.

Some name recognition, yes, but her involvement with Passion was more than a career move. "My perspective shifted to the spread of the fame of Christ, period. That has been the driving force behind my music, the way I lead worship, the way I connect with people—the fact that God is really big; and I want people to see Him that way," she says.

The name Candi Pearson-Shelton most recently appeared on this year's high profile multi-artist concept album *Glory Revealed* (Reunion). She wrote and performed the title track and appeared on its subsequent tour with Mac Powell, Shane & Shane, Brian Littrell and others last month. "The song I wrote is from Isaiah 40 and came at the time my family and I were in the middle of the hardest thing we've ever had to face [her brother Rick passing away from leukemia]. It was a song that God wrote for this time in our lives, so for me to take any credit would be misleading."

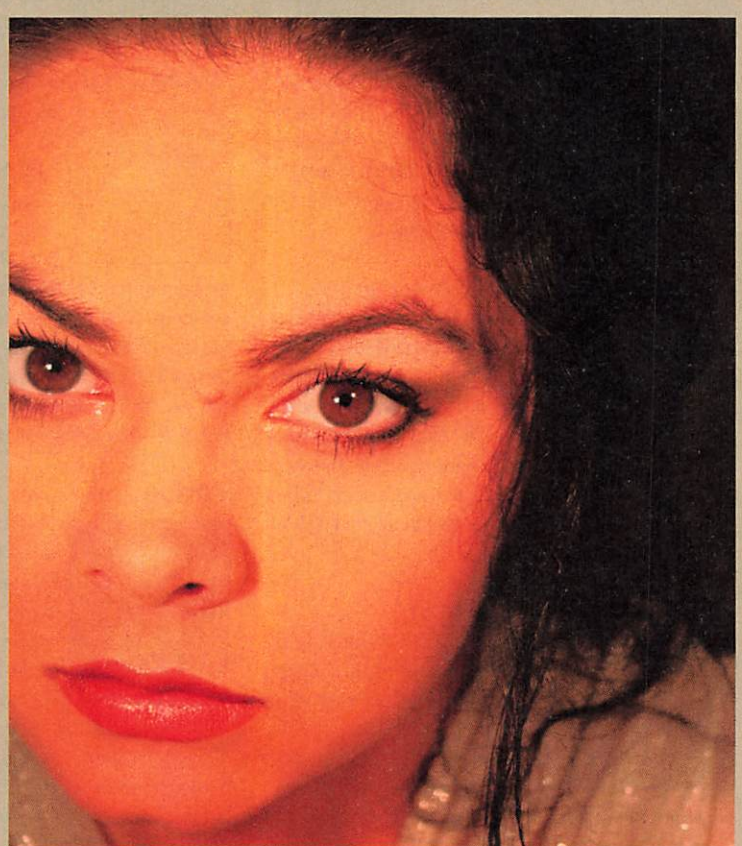
For any large venue exposure Candi Pearson-Shelton has received, she might not be recognized as Candi Pearson-Shelton the blossoming independent artist. Her project *Haunted by Eden* (available at **candilion.com**) showcases a full rock sound made "quirky with jazz and blues infusion."

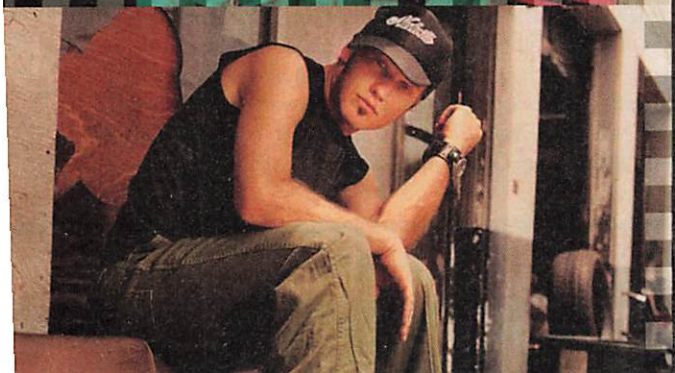
"No one knows who I am, and if they do, it's not because of my record," she says. "I didn't expect it to be huge when I recorded it; I just wanted it to be excellent, and I wanted to be obedient to what I felt God's heart was for it." The record is a collection of songs that ponder what makes people tick and settle for less than we were created for, she says. "All the songs deal with relationships, life situations, God, creation—all boiling down to the fact that the only satisfaction and completely fulfilling pursuit is that of Christ. Until we see Him face to face, we are merely 'haunted by Eden,' catching glimpses of what we were truly created for."

Leading worship before college students, participating in a big-name project, releasing her own CD—still Candi Pearson-Shelton sees herself as anonymous. "I'm in my one-bedroom apartment in North Hollywood, and I am enjoying the fact that today God could say, 'Well done, good and faithful servant,' while no one walking by on the street outside has a clue who I am.

"I often ask God to open my eyes to His constant activity so that I can be blown away, and He certainly is faithful to answer. And when He does, I can't help but be filled with excitement and humility about how He is using me in this great big story." CCM

Writer-editor by day, Starbucks barista by night, ***Jackie A. Chapman*** *is a good Midwestern girl now rooted in Nashville where she can most likely be spotted at a Target or Borders.* ***myCCM.org/jackieachapman***





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dream chasers

SURE **GROUP 1 CREW** NOTCHED A TOP 25 DEBUT ON THE CHRISTIAN ALBUM SALES CHART AND NOW HAS A LEAD SINGLE, "LOVE IS A BEAUTIFUL THING," CONNECTING WITH CHRISTIAN POP RADIO. BUT THAT'S NOT WHY THIS HIP-HOP ACT DARES TO THINK BIG.

By Anthony Barr-Jeffrey

After a year of building serious buzz around its unique sound and identity, you might think Orlando, Florida's Group 1 Crew is sick of having to address a rather ubiquitous comparison—Top 40 mainstays Black Eyed Peas. Not that the trio really has a problem with being compared to a multi-Platinum supergroup. "We got mad love for Black Eyed Peas! What they've done for all genres of music has been amazing," says Pablo, one of Group 1 Crew's emcees, from his studio in Orlando. "If they [the media] are comparing us to any group that is really doing their thing, then great. But we have our own voice, something that we want to bring to the table that is original—something God has given to us." Obviously, G1C could get resentful about the comparisons, but it seems the group has been too busy crafting a self-titled debut (Fervent Records) with its own eclectic, urban pop sound and message to be bothered.

This isn't to say that the Crew hasn't given thought to the impact of embracing an eclectic approach and sound. With influences as diverse as Mary J. Blige, The Roots and Michael Bublé rounding out its urban-based sound, it's not surprising that Group 1 Crew gets knocked, like Black Eyed Peas, by purists for intentionally seeking cross-genre appeal. Pablo contemplates the choice to reject the usual music mold and the surprising results it has rendered. "We really have to think about what those people mean when they talk about 'selling out.' Fans write us and tell us that our music has helped change their lives. I was just writing back to a fan in Alabama who used to cut herself and wrote to tell me that our music has helped to change her mindset. If that's what 'selling out' means, then I want to jump on the bandwagon."

Although he is genuinely thrilled at touching lives in Middle America, "selling out" has offered Pablo another, more personal surprise. While doing a showcase in Chicago with Zondervan Publishers, he sensed that God was showing him an avenue to fulfill a forgotten childhood dream.

"Each one of us [in Group 1 Crew] has our dreams, our visions and our callings with God. For this season I am beginning to see how God is starting to line up different things. Ever since I was little, I've wanted to put centers and facilities together for troubled people," Pablo reveals. "When we went to Zondervan, [we discovered] one of the countries they are working hard to build schools and churches in is my homeland, Guatemala. Signing with Fervent has given me the resources to help give harvest to the seed God has put inside me."

As dreams are renewed and fulfilled with the release of G1C's debut, it is no surprise that dreams are a central theme in the group's music (check out the Just Blaze-influenced street banger "I Have a Dream") and its message. "We've lost track of the act of just dreaming," explains Pablo. "Whatever your heart desires, whatever it is that makes your heart beat, pursue that. Don't worry about imitating what's on the TV or in the media—worry about being yourself and dream!" CCM

Anthony Barr-Jeffrey *has been either playing music or writing about it since the 20th Century despite the fact that he's also a stay-at-home dad and diversity consultant trying to finish a Ph.D. in clinical psychology in Seattle, Wash. A.D.D. suits him well.* ***myCCM.org/aebjeffrey***

"Whatever your heart desires, whatever it is that makes your heart beat, pursue that." –Pablo, Group 1 Crev

From left: Pablo, Blanca and Manwell

THE BEAUTIFUL NEWS ABOUT WORSHIP

WHEN IT COMES TO WRITING SONGS ABOUT GRACE AND REDEMPTION, MATT REDMAN KNOWS THAT OF WHICH HE SPEAKS. By Brian Quincy Newcomb

"Someone once said, 'Songs of devotion spring from a life of devotion.' This couldn't be more true than for Matt Redman," fellow worship artist Tim Hughes tells *CCM*. "The depth and impact of his many songs flow from a life lived centered around Christ. Matt is a passionate worshipper whose poetic lyrics, prophetic insights and Bible-based songs have encouraged and inspired the church over the years."

Indeed, Matt Redman's music is the stuff of modern worship. Literally. With people walking out of churches singing "Blessed Be Your Name," "The Heart of Worship" and "Better Is One Day," Matt is one of the most influential voices in modern Christendom. Yet, for all the positivity and uplift in his repertoire, the Englishman understands that not everyone enters a spiritual setting ready for praise songs.

"There's that Psalm that says 'rejoicing comes in the morning,'" Matt says, "and for some people, it's not morning yet.

"I think Eugene Peterson (who penned *The Message*) says that if you look at the Psalms, 70 percent are laments, written from that dark place, crying out to God, asking, 'What are You going to do about this situation?' I want to honor that; I don't want worship that's escapist. I don't want to write songs or lead worship that's quick to gloss over people's hurt, with some 'you know, we've covered that bit, now let's move on. Cheer up; everything's going to be OK.' That's not the experience of many people's lives."

And, Matt admits, that's not always been the experience of his life. He was born in Watford, near London, a town—he suggests—best known for giving the world Elton John, George Michael and Ginger Spice.

At the age of 7, Matt's father committed suicide, although Matt didn't discover the cause of death until he was about 10. "It's interesting," he says, philosophically, "seasons like that either propel you toward God or away from Him. I think when times like that come in your life, you either go down the path of bitterness and complaint, or you choose to trust God. Even at that age, I knew enough about God to know that—well I don't understand this, but God is good, and God is real. So I actually chose to get more plugged into Him at that young age of 10, after hearing Luis Palau speak at a large rally in a football [soccer] stadium."

When Matt's mother married again, he says his step-father "turned out to be quite an abusive guy. I've thought

a lot about that Psalm that says, 'God's a father to the fatherless' (Psalm 68:5). I would lean on that a lot, when I was 13, 14, 15, and there was a lot of terrible stuff going on at home. It made me lean on some of those things that I knew to be true about God. It's a funny thing, because you never want those things to happen. No one asks for a painful time, but looking back, you can see how God made me to be fruitful in the land of my suffering. Being a worship leader now—writing songs—I look back, and I can see that that solidified my walk with Christ, that time."

Given the problems at home, Matt found support and encouragement as part of an Anglican Church where the youth leader was Mike Pilavachi, who went on to lead Soul Survivor, a spiritual youth movement. Matt remembers, "It was a great church because it had a strong emphasis on encouraging young people to run with stuff. I got into leading worship early, at the age of 15, and then in youth groups. And by the age of 16, I was traveling around on teams from the church. So it was a fantastic environment to grow up in.

"I was happy to be in the Church of England, because the whole liturgical aspect of things showed me that there are certain truths that we need to be visiting regularly in our worship. It gave me a real foundation, and it gave me a passion for the historical expressions of worship, like hymns."

Matt credits not only his early discipleship for the depth and meaning in his songs, but acknowledges that the hard times he's experienced have played a role. "I get a lot of email—I get more encouragement than anyone would ever need—and people are really kind, especially about 'Blessed Be Your Name,' and 'You Never Let Go' which share some real hard, life things. I could never have written those songs if I hadn't gone through some of this stuff.

"I'm not trying to say that every cloud has a silver lining; some things happen—we've had some miscarriages, and I'll never understand that till the day I die. I'm not going to understand some things, but God's holding all things together; He's making some great plans. So, I'm saying that time after time, I've seen God work good things out of terrible situations in life.

"In Psalm 13, there are six or seven questions in a row, 'How long, O Lord? Will you forget me forever?' It's question after question after question, but then you get to the end, and he says, 'But I trust in your unfailing love.' He's not saying that everything's cool now, but he's saying it's a matter of trust. I don't get this. I long to be free from this suffering, but at the end of the day I trust You.

"So, I don't want to smooth it all over, but I would love to give people an eternal perspective, and say, as the Bible says, that however terrible and deep and harsh and weighty their suffering seems right now, it is going to be outweighed. There's a great line in that old hymn, 'On Christ The Solid Rock I Stand': *'When darkness seems to hide His face/I rest on His unchanging grace.'* You perhaps can't see it right now, but God is holding you still. I hope that people can walk out saying, 'Even though my circumstance hasn't changed, I know that God is holding me, and I will hold on until the storm passes.'" CCM

***Matt Redman**'s latest album is* Beautiful News *(sixsteps), which features the hit songs "Shine" and "You Never Let Go." Visit **mattredman.com** for more info.*

*Quincy is The **Rev. Dr. Brian Q. Newcomb**, pastor of Christ Church, United Church of Christ of Maplewood, Mo., just left of St. Louis...and just left of about everybody, for that matter. **myCCM.org/BQN***

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IN REVIEW

★★★★★ INSTANT CLASSIC
★★★★ EXCELLENT
★★★ GOOD
★★ FAIR
★ ENOUGH SAID

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BREAK UP OR RECORD YOUR BEST ALBUM YET? FORTUNATELY, **EVERYDAY SUNDAY** CHOSE WISELY.

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JUST WHEN YOU THOUGHT IT WAS SAFE, **DEREK WEBB** IS BACK. THANK GOODNESS!

59

BONO'S FIRST SELF-PENNED BOOK, *ON THE MOVE*, DOCUMENTS HIS HISTORY OF FAITH AND ACTIVISM

GLORY RISING

*Worship may have inspired **BUILDING 429**'s music since the band's debut, but now it defines it.*

BUILDING 429
Iris to Iris
Word

File Under: Pop/Rock/Modern Worship
★★★★

When Building 429 burst onto the national scene in 2004, the band's breakthrough hit "Glory Defined" topped eight different radio charts and then was named BMI's "Christian Song of the Year" in 2005. Soon the group landed the GMA Dove Award for

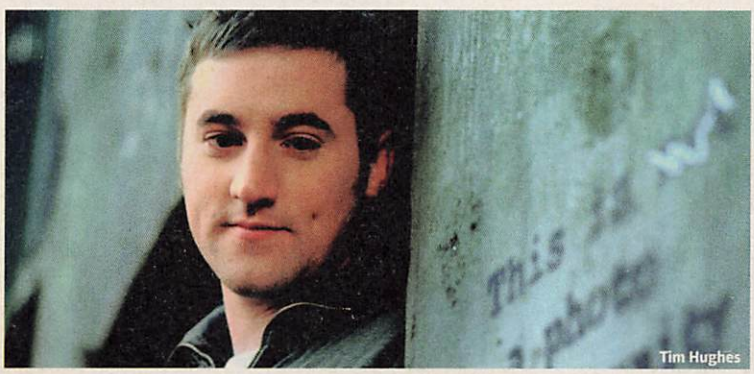
"New Artist of the Year." Such early promise can sometimes disintegrate and leave fans and industry insiders scratching their heads, wondering what happened. That's not the case with Building 429.

While the band avoided the sophomore slump with its second album *Rise*, its the group's latest offering, *Iris to Iris*, that takes its artistry to a new level. Building 429 members Jason Roy, Michael Anderson and Jesse Garcia worked with veteran producer Brown Bannister (Third Day, Sara Groves) to craft an album that is a sonic feast—musically textured and lyrically substantive. It is intimate and vulnerable, yet there is a universal appeal that will resonate with listeners of all ages who hear themselves and their relationship with God echoed in these songs.

Principal songwriter Jason Roy takes the band in a more worshipful direction on this well-written collection. The opening track, "Power of Your Name," which Roy penned with Chris Eaton, has a soaring, anthemic quality. "Your Majesty" is a joyful celebration of God's sovereignty.

One of the highlights on the record is "You Carried Me," a gorgeous ballad that serves as a potent reminder of God's faithfulness. The message in the song is underscored by the passion in Roy's delivery. He's blessed with one of those truly great rock & roll voices, and this song showcases his gift. He has that ability to make you feel every word he's singing, and if you close your eyes, you can almost see God smiling.

Iris to Iris is a sharply focused effort that demonstrates why we'll be hearing from these guys for many years to come. ***DEBORAH EVANS PRICE***



Tim Hughes

EVERYDAY SUNDAY
Wake Up! Wake Up! (Inpop)
File Under: Modern Pop/Rock ★★★½

REVITALIZED OHIO BAND WAKES UP TO DREAM RECORD

Riding a five-year wave of commercial and critical success, Columbus-based Everyday Sunday contemplated calling it quits. But after some serious soul-searching and prayer, the four-piece outfit came to its senses and headed to the studio to record its third project and first with new label Inpop.

Produced by All Star United's Ian Eskelin (Krystal Meyers, Stellar Kart) and mixed by legendary engineer J.R. McNeely (Relient K, Underoath), the resulting *Wake Up! Wake Up!* is charged by high octane energy.

With crisp, clean power-pop influenced guitar and drum riffs, Everyday Sunday has compiled 10 highly contagious radio-friendly tunes that remain artistically sound and sonically pleasing. This invigorating project is fronted by a trio of songs—"Let's Go Back," the album's title track and "Take Me Out"—that hits fast and furious.

Lead singer and primary songwriter Trey Pearson displays his growth as both a vocalist and lyricist on songs like "Find Me Tonight," a heartfelt cry for God's intervention. Most of the songs, however, deal with relationship issues, including some fun moments such as the autobiographical "I'll Get Over It (Miss Elaineous)," a catchy 6/8 number about getting dumped.

Everyday Sunday has taken the opportunity to drastically improve at every turn. *Wake Up! Wake Up!* is yet another (and hopefully not last) giant step taken along its musical journey.

CHAD BONHAM

Everyday Sunday

TIM HUGHES
Holding Nothing Back (Sparrow)
File Under: Modern Worship ★★★

FOR THE MAKER OF ALL THINGS

A veteran in the modern worship scene, UK-based Tim Hughes returns with his third release, *Holding Nothing Back*. Best known for instant classics such as "Here I Am to Worship" and "Beautiful One," Hughes' new album includes 11 solid worship tracks, sure to be embraced by churches around the world.

Clearly, Hughes' passion and focus is to see the church worshipping the Lord. Each of the tracks points toward God, encouraging listeners to fall more deeply in love with Him. There are several standouts, including "Clinging to the Cross," which was co-written with Delirious' Martin Smith. The song shows vulnerability with the lyrics, "*Simply to the cross I cling/Letting go of all earthly things.*" Hughes' heart for the lost and the world around him is shown on "God of Justice," where he writes of the duty of the church to show mercy to the poor and helpless.

Holding Nothing Back stays true to Hughes' modern worship sound. With driving beats and infectious melodies, his songwriting is easily accessible to today's church. His sound could be compared to that of Charlie Hall or fellow Brits Delirious.

Hughes, who has established himself as a key worship songwriter of today's generation, continues to write great songs that lead the church to hold nothing back as they worship.

RACHEL HARROLD

DEAS VAIL
All The Houses Look The Same (Brave New World)
File Under: Indie Rock ★★★★

BEAUTIFUL, FRAGILE MELODIES MARK STUNNING DEBUT

Expect this to be the first in a long line of such releases. After all, the first musical waves of a generation raised on Coldplay and the like are finally washing ashore, trained to release similarly epic anthems.

Last year, the band Leeland found itself the recipient of overt praise for such a beautiful debut. Now, Deas Vail is positioned to receive the same. Haunting, piano-driven melodies can be found throughout *All The Houses Look The Same*, the full-length debut for the Arkansas quintet. Songs such

Deas Vail

as "For Miles to Come" and "...Still" showcase somber, fragile sensibilities, i.e. Aqualung and Eisley.

But ultimately, Deas Vail rises and falls with front man Wes Blaylock's yearning delivery. The classically trained vocalist shines on a standout record, and his falsetto is simply stunning, especially on "Light As Air" where Blaylock effortlessly moves between octaves.

With Blaylock's emotional vocal combined with the heart-on-your-sleeve musicianship, Deas Vail and producer Mark Lee Townsend (Relient K, The Evan Anthem) have perhaps crafted the strongest debut of 2007.

MATT CONNER

BETWEEN THE TREES
The Story and the Song (Bonded)
File Under: Indie Rock ★★★½

THIS AIN'T YOUR BROTHER'S EMO

While it's still technically an indie act, Between the Trees isn't exactly flying under the radar. Rather than peddling its wares the old-fashioned way (out of the trunk of its members' cars, perhaps?), the Orlando-based band is playing dates on the "Warped Tour" and hitting up South by Southwest (Austin's influential music festival).

And if that wasn't enough to solidify its "band on the rise" status, Between the Trees has been receiving props from mainstream rock mags such as *Alternative Press* and *Blender*. But unlike the here-today-gone-tomorrow buzz, the hype is actually justified.

With bright, anthemic songs such as lead single "White Lines & Red Lights," Between the Trees' brand of emo is hardly the whiny, overblown variety that Dashboard Confessional has served up again and again. Rather, Between the Trees goes the more redemptive route (think Switchfoot or Anberlin), whether talking about relationships, God or even depression like the band does so well on "The Way She Feels" and "A Time For Yohe."

Musically speaking, there's plenty to love on *The Story and the Song*, too. Not only do front man Ryan Kirkland's impassioned vocals deliver the goods on all 11 tracks, but the catchy melodies will be stuck in your head for weeks.

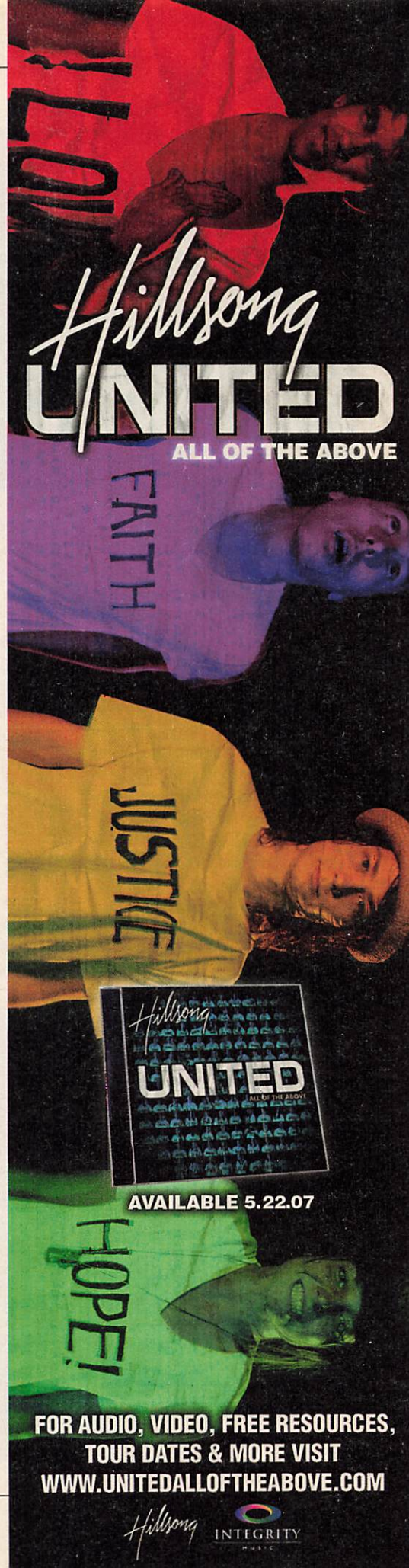
CHRISTA A. BANISTER

VICKY BEECHING
Painting the Invisible (Sparrow)
File Under: Modern Worship/Pop ★★★½

SOPHOMORE JUMP

Theologically brilliant, melodically pleasing and charmingly catchy, Vicky Beeching's second worshipful offering feels right at home alongside some of today's modern worship greats. (Think a female counterpart to Matt Redman.) Beeching secures her place in the progressive worship movement with *Painting the Invisible*. While not groundbreaking, thanks to production courtesy of Ed Cash (Chris Tomlin, Matt Wertz) and Nathan Nockels (Matt Redman, Downhere), the upbeat musicianship and lilting vocals fuse together to form a mature, lyrically rich work of art. And, perhaps Beeching's Oxford-influenced perspective shines best as just that—a striking artistic showpiece.

Beeching collaborates with Cash, Matthew West, Marc Byrd and Joy Williams to create a vibrant color palette of sound ranging from the bouncy self-described *rocksology* (and lead single), "Join the Song," to the haunting beauty of the hymn-like



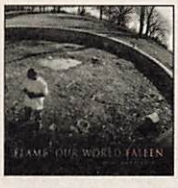
The Innocence Mission

"The Wonder of the Cross." While most of the lyrics are vertical in nature, Beeching ends the album with a personal affirmation detailing her lifelong faith journey in "Twenty-Six Summers."

Although Beeching claims that she can't unearth the words to paint an accurate picture of who God is, with these songs, she gives life to passionate lyrics that proclaim, "*Come and find the meaning of life is to worship the God who can heal every heart.*" Painting in shades of beauty, with this album, Beeching is a few brush strokes closer to revealing the colors of the invisible.

LINDSAY WILLIAMS

FLAME
Our World: Fallen (Cross Movement)
File Under: Hip-hop ★★★★



HIP-HOP FIRE IN THE TRUEST SENSE...

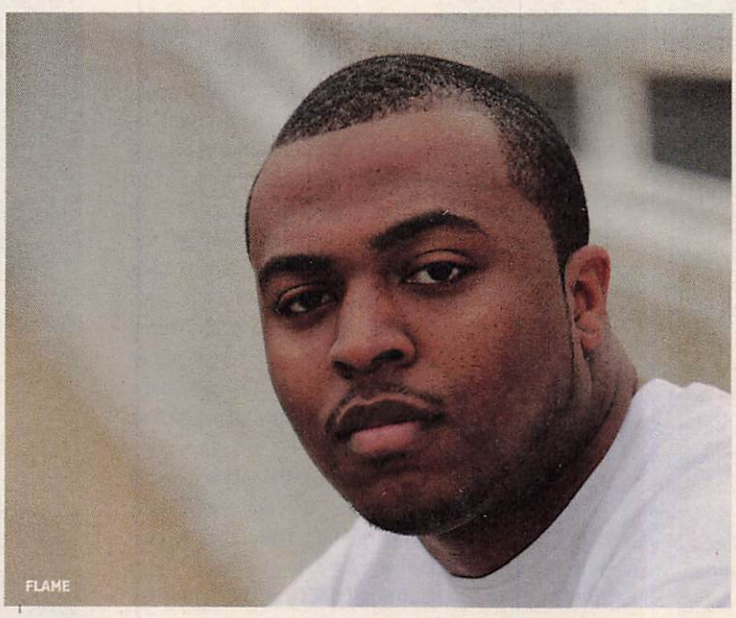
FLAME just keeps 'em coming. After a successful 2004 debut and a solid follow-up a year later, the young Cross Movement affiliate is ready for his third assault, the conceptual *Our World: Fallen*.

To say the brother's on fire is an understatement: Like never before, the St. Louis emcee with the Ludacris-like flow is on a mission to revolutionize lives for Christ, using hard-hitting beats and a shameless zeal for the Gospel to drive his point.

But if previous albums were didactic attempts at educating the masses about the Good News, *Our World: Fallen* is much more urgent. Here, the presentation of the message of salvation isn't just an academic endeavor; it's a matter of life or death. In it, FLAME channels the realities of a planet riddled with sin, a world replete with hopeless souls and broken hearts that hide in their iniquity, their neediness, or the fleeting illusion of a MySpace page.

The realness of the imagery and brooding rhythmic atmosphere render *Our World: Fallen* a dense, hard-to-swallow dose of hip-hop, but the silver lining of Christ's atoning love runs throughout. (To hear how the story unfolds, FLAME already has the sequel all planned out: *Our World: Redeemed* is due in the fall.)

ANDREE FARIAS


FLAME

THE INNOCENCE MISSION
We Walked In Song (Badman)
File Under: Indie Folk-Pop ★★★½

ANOTHER QUIET TRIUMPH

Upon Emily Dickinson's death, hundreds of poems written on slips of paper were found hidden throughout her room. Imagine this veteran Pennsylvania folk-pop act as the musical equivalent of such a discovery. The Innocence Mission's music, like those little poems, seems slight at first, but its beauty demands notice. (After all, it didn't escape the notice of Sixpence None The Richer who repeatedly cited The Innocence Mission as its biggest influence.)

After 1995's *Glow* (A&M), the band shed its drummer to become a three-piece, and its sound has grown mellower and more spare since. Songwriter/vocalist/pianist Karen Peris has always written in the vocabulary of childhood, here exploring the still-fresh loss of her parents through vintage images of days in the park and birthday parties. In the album-topping "Lake Shore Drive," Peris' hushed chirp explains, "*I tell myself now/Things I would have told to you/The smallest plan, the greatest news.*" Lines like "*Regret has gone down in my estimation now*" hover over husband Don's liquid, ringing guitar tones and a dusty beat. Grief has never been so prettily sung.

Though one wishes the band would crank it up a bit, à la *Glow*, on occasion, that's not what they're about anymore. This isn't for everyone—it's not obvious or delivered in religious lingo. But those willing to dig will find a treasure here.

BEAU BLACK

CHASING VICTORY
Fiend (Mono vs. Stereo)
File Under: Hard Rock/Alternative/Hardcore
★★★★

THE FIEND WENT DOWN TO GEORGIA

This 5-piece hard rock outfit from Georgia is much more than just another scream-core band. Fans of the Underoath and My Chemical Romance sound will find plenty to love here, but on *Fiend* Chasing Victory covers a wide range of styles and does it effectively—from the classic hard sound and in-your-face guitars of the opening track, "Chemicals," to the melodic, indie rock of the title track that has a hook that just won't quit. The highly artistic and must-hear track "Wolves" combines great guitar sounds with samples and a trombone. Yes, a trombone! It's these bursts of creativity and originality that help make this album stand out in the hardcore genre.

Lyrically, the album has a lot to say with an intensity that matches the music. Consider the title track which deals with fame, proclaiming, "*You leave the children wanting a popular attitude/You won't admit it's to flatter you/I found the key/The spotlight fiend/I'm bringing you down to your shaking knees.*" Chasing Victory hasn't sold out, and it sounds like the band has a good handle on it. That said, with the release of this brilliant album, these guys will definitely be in for a new level of fame themselves.

DR. TONY SHORE

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JOHNNY CASH
Cash: Ultimate Gospel
(Columbia/Legacy)
File Under: Old-School Country Gospel ★★★

MAN IN BLACK SINGS ABOUT THE LIGHT

Much of the power of Johnny Cash's music, beyond the bold, no-nonsense lyrics, that amazing voice and rockin' band, was the paradox. The "Man in Black," recorded singing to San Quentin prison inmates on the classic 1969 album—the centerpiece of the bio-flick *Walk the Line*—followed the snarling "A Boy Named Sue," with "Peace in the Valley," "Daddy Sang Bass" and "The Old Account."

An incomparable talent, the iconic Cash never turned his back on gospel music, even though most famous for songs about troubled love, mayhem and murder. Collected here are 24 tracks including many of his best-known gospel numbers, "Belshazzar," "It Was Jesus," "Were You There (When They Crucified My Lord)," and lots, lots more.

Of course, these tracks were recorded in studio settings that sound dated and over-produced compared to the five incomparable collections recorded by Rick Rubin during the last decade of Cash's life. But schmaltz was part of the paradox of the great rockin' outlaw of a country singin' man.

The disc is front-loaded with some of the worst offenders, "Here Was a Man" and "The Preacher Said, 'Jesus Said,'" which includes the voice of Billy Graham. Still, these classics and "My Soul Will Sail" and "Far Side of Jordan" give voice to a faith that's "free from the chain gang now."

BRIAN QUINCY NEWCOMB

Derek Webb

DEREK WEBB
The Ringing Bell (INO)
File Under: Rock & Roll ★★★★

TAKING IT TO THE WORLD

With *The Ringing Bell*, Derek Webb takes his listeners on a retro, rhythm-driven trippy stroll through '60s rock & roll sounds and lyrics that are expectedly deep—though happily conversational and even funny. From the vintage sounding electric guitars to the bright, jaunty drums that don't quit, this is a stand-out album for Webb. Not only is *The Ringing Bell* a musical departure from the acoustic, organic vibe we've come to know and love, lyrically, Webb brings his poignant conversations about war, politics and peace into the open and shines just enough vintage love on them to make even the most passive of listeners nod his or her head and smile along to the infectious beat.

Produced by Cason Cooley (The Normals, Bill Mallonee) and Webb, *The Ringing Bell* resonates of The Beatles and Dylan. And like the songs of those legends, cuts such as "A Savior on Capitol Hill" deliver an in-your-face social commentary that posits Webb as a modern day peace and love (dare I say it?) hippie. Not to worry. His endearing "I Wanna Marry You All Over Again" infuses just the right amount of sweetness to soften the edges he not-so-gingerly rails against. *The Ringing Bell* is fresh, candid and just good, old-school rock & roll. Webb's pushed boundaries before, but this time, he just might have pushed his way into the must-have summer playlist of new fans, old fans and any Beatles' fan on the planet.

CAROLINE LUSK

URBAN D
Unorthodox: When Hip-Hop Meets Church CD/DVD
(EMI Gospel/Flavor Alliance)
File Under: Rap/Urban ★★★

REDEMPTIVE HIP-HOP IN COMMUNITY

With this double disc set, Urban D offers up the best music of his near decade long career as well as a DVD overview of the revolutionary hip-hop oriented Crossover Church. Even as the Tampa-based fellowship has come into its own with Urban D as pastor, D himself is coming into his own.

Musically, where Urban D's past ventures seemed a bit two-dimensional in spots, *Unorthodox* has some refreshing variety. With a surprisingly liquid-like flow, D brilliantly dissects materialism on the razor sharp, reggaeton-laced "Okay." And D continues to grow as a lyricist, able to address the big picture without losing the personal. On "Temptation" D somehow manages to stay encouraging while addressing a tough issue like Internet pornography. He is also able to maintain perspective in a deeply

Urban D

moving account of loss with "Purpose." Other highlights include the dense Midwest soul-flavored cipher track "Church" as well as the ultra-smooth, South Beach R&B glider, "Home." D also keeps things gritty, grinding on the atmospheric, synth-heavy "Culture."

Occasional uneveness aside, *Unorthodox*, both CD and DVD, is a refreshing look at an emcee and a faith community who revel in true hip-hop culture and the God who created it.

ANTHONY BARR-JEFFREY

ANDY DAVIS
Fine China EP (Independent)
File Under: Acoustic Rock/Pop ★★★½

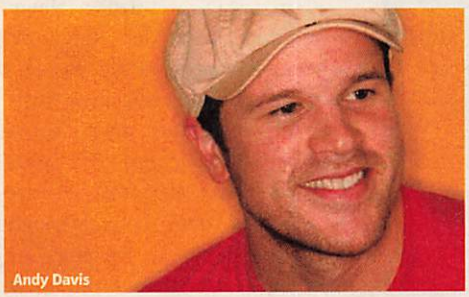
ART ON DISPLAY

No newbie to the indie scene, Andy Davis has spent a good deal of time on the road opening for fellow indie artists Matt Wertz and Dave Barnes as well as Columbia artist Mat Kearney. Garnering praise for his debut album, *Thinks of Her*, Davis' music has also been featured on ABC's "Beautiful People."

The *Fine China* EP demonstrates the growth Davis has experienced as a songwriter and vocalist in the years since his debut album (which Charlie Peacock helped direct and mix). Davis' perfect tone and effortless falsetto make his tenor voice come alive. With "Earth and Venus'" opening line, "*I heard that the Earth had a thing for Venus*," Davis' ability to poetically explore the common experience of longing is evident as the chorus dives into "*Wherever you are/You are never close enough.*"

With more risk-taking melodies and unique production, Davis takes another step toward distinguishing himself. And the creativity of the arrangements can be credited to Davis himself, who also produced the EP. Funky and rhythmic, the jazzy title track is one of Davis' best yet, and the guitar-driven "Chicago, City of Shoulders" has a catchy hook and tastefully simple arrangement that will be hard to get out of your head!

Fine China lives up to its name and is worth every penny it costs to order it from iTunes or Davis' website, **andydavisonline.com**. ***KATE MCDONALD***


Andy Davis

THIS BEAUTIFUL REPUBLIC
Even Heroes Need A Parachute (ForeFront)
File Under: Alternative Rock ★★½

NOW *THIS* IS EVANGELICAL ROCK

For its debut CD, produced by Allen Salmon (most noted for engineering records by Sanctus Real and Mute Math), This Beautiful Republic has recorded a strong effort of mostly radio-friendly rock anthems. Although a little formulaic and repetitive at times, the band still manages to invest enough creative energy into each track that it should keep even the most apathetic listener engaged. Where This Beautiful Republic really shines, however, is when it seems to let loose and have fun within the moment. The two opening tracks on the album—"Casting Off" and "Going Under"—are prime examples. They are the kind of songs that will inspire you to shake the dust off of your favorite air guitar and play along. If the band could have kept up the same momentum throughout the entire CD, this disc would have hit album written all over it.

Lyrically, This Beautiful Republic's message is anything but subtle, and the band members make

This Beautiful Republic

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UpTowN
UPTOWN
MaRoN
Grrr Records proudly introduces *Uptown*, the debut album from the gifted singer/songwriter Maron Gaffron. With disarmingly real lyrics and her compelling voice Maron explores the everyday issues of life and love, hope and failure with honesty and vulnerability through the eyes of faith.
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Rosie Thomas

no apologies for it. They are here for one purpose: to proclaim the good news of Jesus Christ. This, in itself, is very refreshing in light of the myriad of rock bands today that often seem intent on using cryptic lyrics that are hard to interpret. Hopefully, we will be hearing much more from this promising young act far into the future.

PAUL DURHAM

ROSIE THOMAS

These Friends of Mine (Nettwerk)
File Under: Acoustic Singer/Songwriter ★★★★

...WITH A LITTLE HELP FROM HER FRIENDS

In her own quiet and sincere way, singer/songwriter Rosie Thomas is putting her mark on the music scene with her most recent release, *These Friends of Mine*. From the beautiful melodies, to Thomas' sweet falsetto voice, to the sparse acoustic arrangements, every piece of the album works together to create a peaceful listening experience, as she invites you into her living room to listen in on her and her friends doing what they do best—playing music together.

Thomas' comrades were a vital part of every aspect of this album. A far cry from the normal hustle and bustle of a recording studio, she invited longtime pals Sufjan Stevens and Denison Witmer to join her as she wrote and recorded many songs in kitchens or bedrooms. The result is raw and includes outtakes of comments and laughter among friends, all of which add to Thomas' unique sound.

The title track captures the essence of the album. "Much Farther to Go" and "New York City" pay homage to her favorite place. Covers of "Songbird," "Paper Doll" and "The One I Love" shine with her personal touch. "Kite Song" expresses her desire to fly away from the weighty issues surrounding us.

These Friends of Mine reminds listeners of a group of friends passing the guitar around. It is the simple, yet beautiful, combination of good friends making good music. *RACHEL HARROLD*

RYAN WILKINS

Beautiful Disrepair: The Edgerton Sessions (Independent)
File Under: Americana Singer/Songwriter ★★★★

A PLACE WHERE INTELLECT AND EMOTION INTERSECT

An indie artist based out of Cleveland, Ohio, Ryan Wilkins first began to gain recognition in his home city as worship leader for the young adult community "sevenonseven." Following an EP in 2004 and his first full-length, *Parts*, in 2005, Wilkins' brand of rootsy, art-pop—aptly described by one fan as "a cross between Nickel Creek and David Gray"—has found his influence spreading.

Now, his latest project, *Beautiful Disrepair*, will surely connect with an even larger audience: It is full of such haunting beauty and joyful complexity, one almost cannot find the words to describe it. From the dark piano ballad "The Other Side" to the countrified dance number "That Same Familiar Sound" to the acoustic pop of "Lay Down My Arms," Wilkins challenges listeners to rethink their place in the world—and then, at album's end, hit the "Play" button to rethink it again.

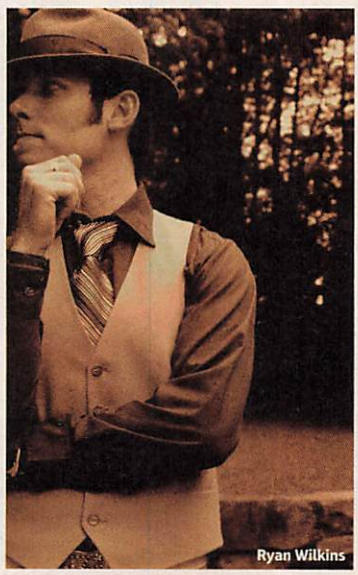
For every album sold, Wilkins is giving $1 to the 1000 Wells Project through Blood:Water Mission, which builds and repairs wells to ensure clean drinking water for African communities. For more info on Wilkins, go to **myccm.org/ryanwilkins**, and to buy the album visit **awarestore.com**. *CHRIS WELL*

OCEANS ABOVE

Oceans Above (Sparrow)
File Under: Modern Worship ★★★

CONCEPT ALBUM? TRY CONCEPT *GROUP*.

Described by its record label as "more of a concept than an actual band," Oceans Above is a group of musicians who are attempting to make classic praise & worship songs sound totally original and completely their own. The resulting debut album not only defines Oceans Above's unique sound, but takes the familiar into a new realm of synthetic sound and electric energy.


Ryan Wilkins

The album kicks off with an ethereal, other-worldly spin on the tried and true worship classic, "Beautiful One." It jumps immediately from there to the collective's interpretation of "O Praise Him" which, oddly enough, reminds the listener of a *Moulin Rouge*-esque montage. The next few songs embellish the simple melodies of worship classics with heavily layered synth, unique percussion selections (xylophone, anyone?) and repetitive vocal descants that bring to mind the music of the UK bands Frou Frou and Zero 7, with a hint of Imogen Heap's styling thrown in. While Oceans lacks the finesse of many other electronic-sounding groups, originality shines through with this debut effort.

Perhaps Oceans Above's smartest move comes toward the latter half of the album when multi-talented indie artist Katie Herzig's vocal takes the lead. While Steve Sudduth's voice, which commands the first half of the record, is pleasant, it's not exceptional and tends to get lost between the many layers. When Herzig comes in, though, her unique voice gives the group what they need to hold on to—their own cohesive sound—instrumentation and vocals. Oceans Above has not "arrived," but with obvious artistic potential, the *concept* is well on its way.

CAROLINE LUSK

MAGGIE MCCLURE

Maggie McClure (Independent)
File Under: Indie Pop/Rock ★★★½

INSTANT CONNECTION

From the first listen to Maggie McClure's self-titled album, there is no doubt this 20-year-old singer/songwriter/pianist has earned a place among the most progressive artists.

Collaborating with ultra-creative producer Will Hunt (Apt Core, Shane & Shane, Shawn McDonald), resulted in a project that is endearingly inventive and fresh. Melodies are anything but ordinary, and the

The Wedding

production and arrangements are equally as unexpected and genius.

McClure's self-titled album, (follow-up to her 2005 debut release *What It's Like*), is a record focused on the relational aspects of life. Often using the canvas of dating, she explores the heartaches and joys of relationships with surprising honesty.

The opening track, "Out of My Mind," dives into the issue of how to let go once a relationship is over. "What's It Like," echoing a similar theme, asks the question *"What's inside your head?/I wonder if there will ever be a place for me again?"* While dealing with these highly relatable human experiences, McClure brings to the table a Christian worldview that stands in stark contrast to mainstream pop. Her gut-level, raw approach extends into her songs that are more blatantly spiritual. "Believe" exhorts listeners to press into their faith, and the chorus of "Fall Into Me" is a cry for rescue to which God answers, *"My child I'm here/Fall into me, fall into me."*

Visit **maggiemcclure.com** for more info and to purchase the album. *KATE MCDONALD*

Maggie McClure

THE WEDDING

Polarity (Brave New World)

File Under: Alternative Rock ★★★

EMO PLUS PUNK EQUALS ENJOYABLE ALTERNATIVE ROCK OFFERING.

After touring with the likes of Anberlin, Number One Gun and John Reuben, along with releasing a self-titled CD on the quickly defunct Rambler imprint in 2005, The Wedding turns in its sophomore effort. Despite a record label shift, most of the band's defining elements remain in tact, from surging power chords, to ramped up emo arrangements, to radio-friendly punk. Besides the sonic consistency, the guys also turn in a spiritually-centered offering, touching on themes of faith, commitment, redemption and good old-fashioned rock & roll fun.

"Say Your Prayers" is inspiring on all planes, exploding with aggressive infectiousness while encouraging listeners (and even fellow bands) to truly live out an adventurous life in Christ rather than disingenuously talking the talk. "I'll Sleep When I'm Dead" has a slight Celtic punk influence and relies on call and response lyrics that speak of living life to the fullest, free from regret. Additional muscle comes through the self-explanatory "It's Time To Rock (OK?)," along with the jarring "The Last Stand" (think Hawthorne Heights meets Anberlin). The Wedding also stretches its sonic wings come "Revelation" (a placid, orchestrated ballad) and "Fireworks" (a '60s surf/country-inspired reflection), which are sure to usher in a wider audience, though some fans may wonder why the band breaks from its otherwise successful formula. *ANDY ARGYRAKIS*

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NEW RELEASES
MAY 2007

MAY 1

Building 429 ..... *Iris to Iris* (Word)
Joel Engle ..... *I Believe In You* (Spin 360)
Nate Huss ..... *Here With Me* (Slanted)
Phil Joel ..... *deliberateKids* (Indelible)
Robin Mark ..... *East of the River* (Integrity)
Prelude ..... *Learn to Fly* (TrackStar)
PureNRG ..... *PureNRG* (Fervent)
Sound of the New Breed ..... *Freedom* (Integrity Gospel)
Various ..... *What I Love About Sunday: 17 Inspirational Songs for Family & Home from Today's Top Country Artists* (Word)
Derek Webb ..... *The Ringing Bell* (INO)
Women of Faith ..... *Amazing Freedom* (Word)
Women of Faith ..... *I Will Be Free* (Word)

MAY 8

Article One ..... *Article One* (Inpop)
Chasing Victory ..... *Fiends* (Mono vs. Stereo)
Joshua's Troop ..... *JT3-Joshua's Troop Live* (New Haven)
newsboys ..... *GO | Remixed* (Inpop)
Pettidee ..... *Resurrections: Past, Present and Future* (Beatmart)
Rush of Fools ..... *Rush of Fools* (Midas)
Urban D ..... *Unorthodox: When Hip-Hop Meets Church* (EMI Gospel/Flavor Alliance)

This double-disc set features the original *Resurrections* compilation of popular **PETTIDEE** tracks as well as 10 of his new southern hip-hop recordings.

MAY 15

Anthem Avenue ..... *When Angels Come* (Doxology/Infinity)
Flatfoot 56 ..... *Jungle of the Midwest Sea* (Flicker)

MAY 22

Jeff Deyo ..... *Unveil* (Indelible)
Everyday Sunday ..... *Wake Up! Wake Up!* (Inpop)
FFH ..... *Unto Your Name* (Kindred/Word)
The Fold ..... *Secrets Keep You Sick* (Tooth & Nail)
Mary Donnelly Haskell ..... *Power of the Cross* (Martingale)
Hillsong United ..... *All of the Above* (Hillsong/Integrity)
Daniel Kirkley ..... *Let Love Win* (Centricity)
Britt Nicole ..... *Say It* (Sparrow)
Our Heart's Hero ..... *Our Heart's Hero* (Gotee)

BRITT NICOLE performed as an opener on this year's "Winter Jam Tour" and saw her song "Indestructible" appear on the *WOW Next 2007* CD.

MAY 29

All Star United ..... *Love & Radiation* (7 Spin)
Gregory Paul Smith ..... *I Can Live Again* (Creative Soul/Infinity)
Jason Upton ..... *Beautiful People* (Integrity)

BUZZ FACTOR

[*CCM* READERS SOUND OFF ON THEIR FAVORITE NEW ALBUMS.]

JACKSON WATERS
Come Undone
(Word)

Come Undone plays beautifully all the way through and does an excellent job of showing the different sides of Jackson Waters that fans see live—not only an everyman's rock & roll band with a soulful lead singer and plenty of energy, but also a slower, keyboard-led quintet that plays soft, beautiful rock. I've always made room for both kinds of music in my CD player; *Come Undone* proves it can be done—and done well—on one album.
Felisha Baquera, *Little Rock, AR*

SWITCHFOOT
Oh! Gravity.
(Columbia/Sparrow)

Oh! Gravity. is awesome. The music and lyrics connect with young people. My favorite song is the title track. And "Faust, Midas and Myself" speaks to me. It tells you that being rich isn't everything and that you should be happy with what you have.
Faith (aka "Punker Chick")
Moreno Valley, CA
myccm.org/hawkgirl

RELIENT K
Five Score and Seven Years Ago
(Capitol/Gotee)

What else can be said about this near perfect pop masterpiece? Great relationship songs, and the epic closer "Deathbed" is the song you want to play for your friends who aren't believers. The DVD version has great acoustic recordings of some of their hits as well.
Jim Richardson, *Pittsford, NY*
myccm.org/jsrichie

DEAD POETIC
Vices
(Tooth & Nail)

This melodic modern rock band just keeps getting better and better. Their music sounds more mature, and their lyrics are more honest and straightforward than ever before.
Joeru, *The Philippines*

DELIRIOUS
Now is the Time: Live at Willow Creek
(Sparrow)

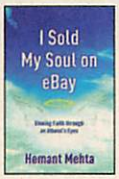
This DVD/CD is the most incredible live performance I've ever seen or heard by anyone—the music, the lighting, the professional quality of the entire thing is amazing, and the passion and transparency of the band is just mind blowing. Not only is it enjoyable to watch, it urges you to draw closer to Jesus and "shine with the face of Christ divine"!
Victoria Dingemans, *Dallas, TX*

What's your favorite new album?
Let us know at Feedback@CCMmagazine.com.

JIM HENDERSON and MATT CASPER
Jim & Casper Go to Church (Tyndale)

Forget "American Idol" or "The Amazing Race." This "reality show" concept is far more entertaining (and insightful). In hopes of becoming a better pastor, JIM HENDERSON hired MATT CASPER, an atheist copywriter and musician to provide candid commentary on several church services across America. Now in the equally hilarious and sobering *Jim & Casper Go to Church*, we get Casper's perspective on worship, emergent churches, mega-churches, missions and lots more.

HERMANT MEHTA
I Sold My Soul on eBay (Waterbrook)



When an atheist named HERMANT MEHTA auc-tioned off the opportunity to send him to the church of the highest bidder's choice, it was an opportunity that Jim Henderson couldn't refuse. Now in *I Sold My Soul on eBay*, Mehta tells his fascinating story and provides, much like *Jim & Casper Go to Church*, a no-holds-barred perspective on today's churches.

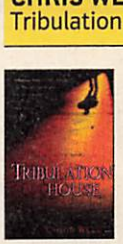
JERUSHA CLARK and DR. EARL HENSLIN
Inside a Cutter's Mind (Th1NK)

Cutting and other forms of self-injury have become such a problem for the younger crowd in recent years that Plumb and ZOEgirl have written songs about it. Now with *Inside a Cutter's Mind*, JERUSHA CLARK and DR. EARL HENSLIN get to the heart of the matter as they provide both the facts and the best ways to help cutters. While the language can get a little technical at times, the book is ultimately a comprehensive and valuable resource that's worth checking out.

BONO
On the Move (Thomas Nelson)

Complete with beautiful—and equally heart-breaking—photos that U2's BONO took of African children on his first World Vision trip to Ethiopia, *On the Move* uniquely captures his biographical keynote address at last year's National Prayer Breakfast. While both praising and challenging the church, Bono discussed poverty and the AIDS pandemic in provocative detail, stating at one point, "This is not about charity—this is about justice and equality." (Bonus: All book royalties will benefit The ONE Campaign [**ONE.org**] to make extreme poverty history.)

CHRIS WELL
Tribulation House (Harvest House)



OK, how does he come up with this stuff? While we'll never know exactly how crime novelist—and fellow *CCM* contributing editor—CHRIS WELL does it, the reader reaps the benefits of his vivid imagination with *Tribulation House*. While it would be downright mean of us to reveal anything about this well-crafted plot, let's just say it may or may not involve the Apocalypse, loan sharks, mobsters and preachers. Got your attention now didn't we?

Christa A. Banister is a freelance writer, author and blogger in St. Paul, Minn. Her first novel, Around the World in 80 Dates: Confessions of a Christian Serial Dater will be published by NavPress in September.
myCCM.org/christabanister

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Three Chords and the Truth

Hybrids, babies, strings and other things...

PAUL REED SMITH HOLLOWBODY GUITAR

Mark Lee using his Hollowbody II

The list of musicians who play Paul Reed Smith guitars reads like a Who's Who of rock & roll. Carlos Santana (Santana), Noah Henson (Pillar), Ryan Shrout (Kutless), Cody Pellerin (Stellar Kart), Nils Lofgren (The E Street Band) and Mark Lee (Third Day) are just a few. The PRS Hollowbody family provides acoustic qualities in a thinline hollow electric. I had the opportunity to park a Hollowbody II guitar, identical to the one Mark Lee uses, at my studio for a few weeks, and the instrument was fantastic. Mark describes his draw to the guitar, "Ever since I saw Stone Gossard use a hybrid guitar several years ago, I've been intrigued by the idea of blurring the lines between acoustic and electric. I got this guitar right after we recorded 'Til the Day I Die,' which features dramatic changes between acoustic and really heavy electric textures. I had no idea how I'd pull it off live. Then I got this guitar, and my question was quickly answered. We also have a few songs, like 'Wire' and 'Mountain of God,' where the same part is doubled on acoustic and electric. This guitar is great for that."

Fully loaded, this guitar has a retail price of $7,150. It's expensive but well worth it. A more affordable alternative is the PRS Hollowbody I Piezo with moons, no upgrade top charge, and nickel hardware that retails for $4,800. If both of these guitars are out of your financial grasp, it might be worth considering the new SE Custom Semi-Hollow guitar that lists for $858. The SE line of PRS guitars is made in Korea instead of the U.S. Check out **prsguitars.com** for more info.

THE G7TH CAPO

If you regularly use a capo, then buying the G7th Performance Capo might be the best $40 you'll ever spend. By using a patented wrap-spring clutch mechanism, this device incorporates an entirely new approach to capo design. It is simple to use; it looks great; and it has none of the disadvantages of conventional capos. It's no wonder that the thing won *Guitarist Magazine*'s "Gold Award" in the UK and an *Acoustic Guitar Magazine* "Bronze Award" in the U.S. If that's not impressive, the fact that everyone from Bryan Adams to Eric Clapton to Richard Thompson is using them should turn some heads. Visit **g7th.com** to find out more.

CURT MANGAN STRINGS

What do Relient K, Copeland, Sanctus Real, Chasing Victory, Fireflight and tons of other bands have in common? They all love and use Curt Mangan® FusionMatched® strings. Curt Mangan makes strings for electric and acoustic guitars, basses, banjos, mandolins, pedal steel, lap steel, baritones and classical guitars; so whatever your string needs are, you should check them out. The strings are a staple in my studio, and they have always performed wonderfully (as long as the person using them is playing wonderfully). Check out **curtmangan.com**.

BABY TAYLOR

Taylor markets the $378 Baby Taylor as the ultimate travel companion since it delivers an impressive volume and tone, and it's only three-quarters the size of a full-sized guitar. Because of its size it is also the perfect youth guitar. The instrument is beautifully made and is available with either a solid spruce or solid mahogany top.

Rick Elias turned me on to the Baby Taylor when he was producing Rich Mullins' *Jesus Record* a decade ago. Even though it is marketed more as a travel guitar than a studio guitar it still sounds great, and unlike a lot of full-size acoustics, it works well in a band track because it doesn't fight with all of the other instruments, yet it still cuts through.

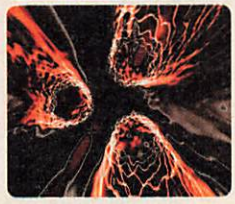
Slightly bigger than the Baby Taylor but still shy of a full-size guitar, the Taylor Big Baby is another wonderful instrument. The Big Baby, which lists for $578, has a solid spruce top and a sturdy laminate back and sides. Go to **taylorguitars.com/Guitars/Baby-Taylor**.

SOUNDSPECTRUM G-FORCE PLATINUM

SoundSpectrum describes its product as the place where music meets art. I was a bit skeptical at first, but after spending about half a dozen hours staring at my computer screen in total nirvana since installing it less than a week ago, I think they may just be right.

Artists as varied as David Gilmour, Aerosmith, Seal and Michael W. Smith have made G-Force a part of their live performances. You can check out some of the G-Force visuals from Smith's last tour at **youtube.com/watch?v=OA9rHl8ZLOM**.

The SoundSpectrum website has free trial versions of G-Force, SoftSkies and other SoundSpectrum products available for download for iTunes, Windows Media Player, Musicmatch and other popular music players allowing you to experience your music in a new way. If you like what you see, the G-Force Platinum package is yours for $30. Go to **soundspectrum.com** for details.



ROLAND RD-700SX STAGE PIANO

The Roland RD-700SX is the perfect solution for a church looking for a wonderful sounding, yet affordable, piano. This $2,499 instrument is equipped with a host of authentic and expressive multisampled grands. Driven by Roland's most powerful sound engine and a pair of world-class grand piano waveforms at its core, the RD-700SX is wonderful. It features 128-voice polyphonic performance, a Progressive Hammer-Action keyboard and an expanded soundset (which includes brilliant electric pianos, authentic virtual tonewheel organs and more). See **rolandus.com**.

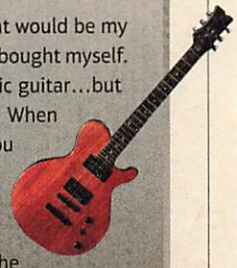
myGEAR

[AS MUSICIANS IN OUR MYCCM.ORG COMMUNITY BLOG ABOUT THEIR FAVORITE GEAR, WE'RE PLEASED TO SPREAD THE CHEER...]

My favorite instrument is my **Marshall amp**! It's a 50 watt Marshall, and I'm a lead guitar player, so I love it. I got it for Christmas from my adorable hubby... It's the best sounding amp in the world for playing Christian rock. This Marshall amp has the best tone; it sounds like the most beautiful clean bell ringing—and also the rocking-est grind a girl needs to lift us all up to God in the chorus!

***MaryCary*,**
myccm.org/ThankFuLL

I think that my favorite instrument would be my **Dean Evo 60**. It is the first guitar I bought myself. I had a bass...and also an acoustic guitar...but the Dean electric is my favorite! When you pay for something yourself you have a special appreciation for it. This kind of reminds me of God, He loves us so much that He paid for us. Jesus came to die on the cross to give us eternal life; He paid our way to heaven, so to speak.



Adam Swords
myccm.org/yourchristianmusicspecialist

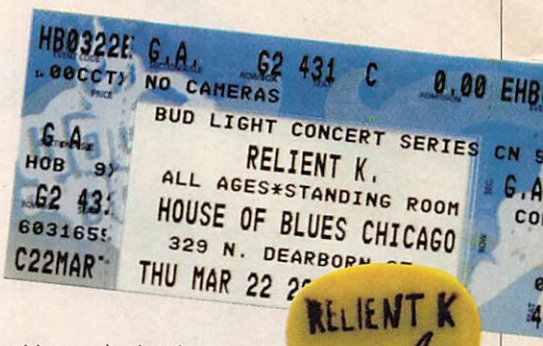
What's your favorite instrument? Post a little anecdote about it on your **myCCM.org** blog. Then tell us to check out what you wrote, and you could find yourself in a future segment of *CCM*'s "myGEAR." *(High resolution pictures of you with the instrument are a plus.)*

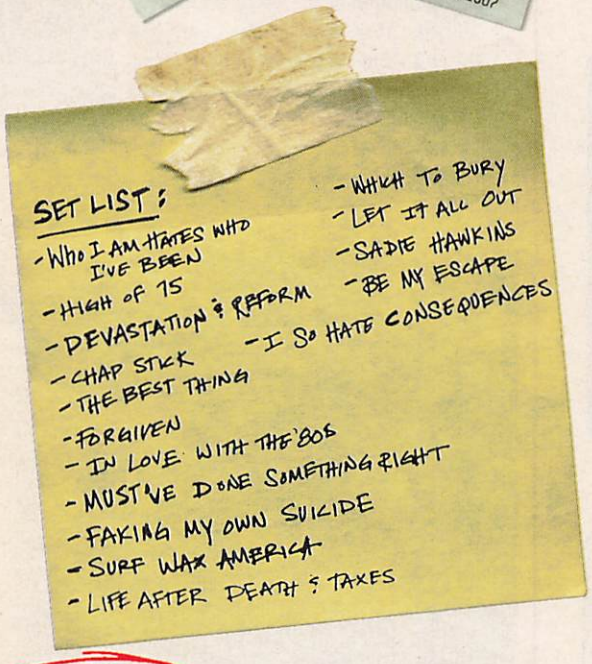
Russ Long is an award-winning recording engineer who has helmed Gold and Platinum albums by newsboys and Sixpence None the Richer as well as recordings by Chris Tomlin, Relient K, MercyMe, Wilco, Phil Keaggy, Over the Rhine and others. Russ has created an educational DVD on studio engineering tailored for singers, songwriters and home studio enthusiasts. For more information, visit **audioinstruction.com**.

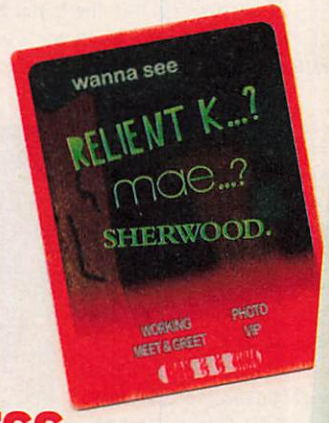
By Andy Argyrakis

SHOWTIME

In the first of two sold out shows (which capped off at nearly 1,300 faithful per night) **Relient K** unveiled songs from the new *Five Score and Seven Years Ago* (Capitol/Gotee) and a smattering of earlier hits. As headliners, the group had more time to cover its expansive catalogue than on last fall's "Nintendo Fusion Tour," not to mention additionally exciting production. A backdrop bore the band's logo, while enhanced panel lighting created an ultra cool blinding effect during the energetic "High of 75" and "Must've Done Something Right." Add in a multi-instrumental makeup (including singer Matt Thiessen switching between guitar and piano), plus several sugary sweet career staples ("Life After Death and Taxes," "Sadie Hawkins Dance"), and this was unquestionably Relient K's most impressive run to date.

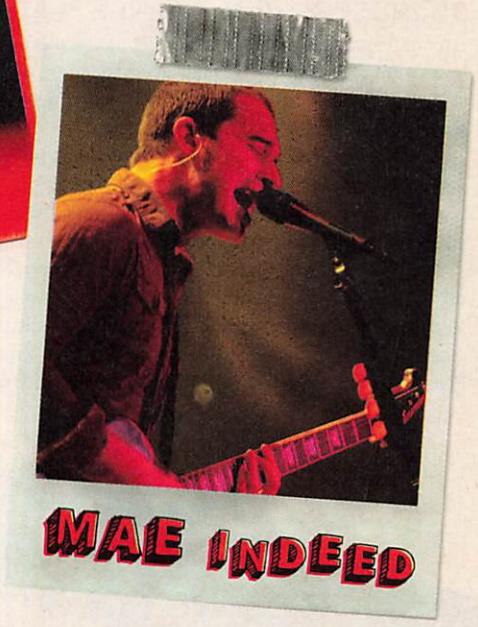






ALL ACCESS

"In a headlining show, you have a lot more freedom to play more songs, some of which might be slightly obscure because a lot of kids who are coming already know your stuff," said Thiessen, backstage before the concert. "We've also been incorporating some of the new stuff, which kids have known right off the bat, and they sing along just as loud as the older songs. The crowds have been awesome all across the board!"



Opening act **Mae** is riding regally on the heels of its latest release *The Everglow* (Tooth & Nail), but members are also flying high from a recent signing with Capitol Records and an upcoming summer slot with **The Fray**. But the band still took care of the business at hand, turning in a riveting 40 minutes filled with artistically satisfying alternative rock.

K-FANS

Margret-Ann Ferrell
Northbrook, IL (17)

I can really relate to a lot of Relient K's songs, especially "Be My Escape." Even if a song's message isn't overt, their music is upbeat, and they always put on a feel-good concert.

Kaitlyn Bowden
Dekalb, IL (14)

Beyond loving their music, they are such an inspiration on my life. I loved everything about the whole experience, and my favorite song was "Who I Am Hates Who I've Been."

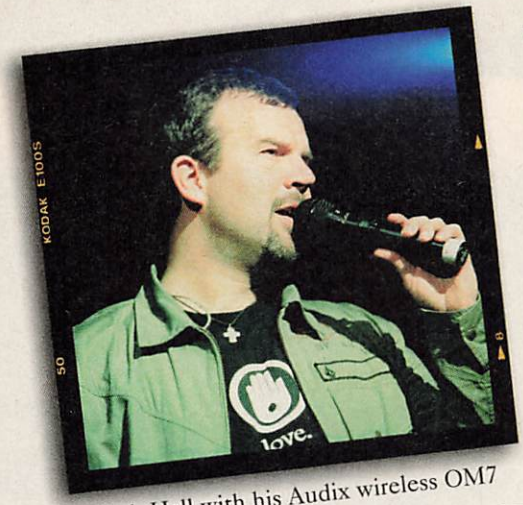
Steve Hahn
Joliet, IL (23)

I have listened to them since their first album, and my band opened for them once at our church. They're really down-to-earth guys, and I appreciate their hearts. They don't beat you over the head, but they still talk about truth. It's great to see them reach a greater audience in the mainstream, too.

Andy Argyrakis is a Chicago-based writer/photographer. He regularly contributes to the *Chicago Tribune*, runs a celebrity column in the *Daily Journal* and writes daily for *Concert Livewire*, amongst many other outlets. **myCCM.org/andya**

ROAD REPORT: Casting Crowns and Audix Wireless Microphones

AUDIX



Mark Hall with his Audix wireless OM7

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—Mark Hall/ Lead Vocalist Casting Crowns

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From left: Third Day's Tai Anderson, Mark Lee, Mac Powell, David Carr, Brad Avery

COME TOGETHER

THIRD DAY's TAI ANDERSON learns what it means to live in the "kingdom of the towel."

The mysterious and wonderful reality that we're one body with many members means, whether we like it or not, that not only do each of us desperately need community, but that community also desperately needs each of us.

Those were truths Third Day bassist Tai Anderson says he only really began to awaken to in the summer of 2005. Anchoring a hard-touring band that plays well over a hundred dates a year, Tai had slipped into an easy routine of rolling off the tour bus in Atlanta at 6:30 Sunday mornings feeling like he had earned the right to a little down time and personal space.

"On the road," Tai says, "we have accountability with each other in the band, but when I'd get home, I'd stay pretty well disengaged from any real [church] connection. I had an entitlement kind of attitude. The local church was good for my wife and kids, but I had a 'pass' because I was in Third Day… During interviews we'd talk about youth and how we value youth, and, yet, I wasn't plugged in with the youth in my local church. Or we'd talk about worship, and we'd be leading worship on the road in these huge concerts and worship experiences, and, yet, at home I wasn't plugged in even as a participant."

Tai's inconsistencies were soon to be challenged, though, when Third Day shared the bill at Scotland's Frenzy Fest with Delirious and the newsboys. Talking with Delirious' lead singer, Martin Smith, at the hotel afterward, Tai was struck by the international worship leader's focus.

"Here's this guy whose songs are sung around the world," Tai recalls, "but all he would talk about was his local church and what was happening there."

A day or two later, while waiting for a connecting flight in the Chicago airport, Tai grabbed lunch with newsboys front man Peter Furler. Peter too, gushed about his local church, the people he was plugged in with there, and the accountability he was finding.

"[Peter] wasn't afraid to directly challenge me," Tai says, "and he identified very pointedly to me the inconsistency I was having in my life. So, with both of those guys I really took it to heart. Those conversations 'flipped the switch.' It was time to start bringing these two parts of my life together."

Tai's first step was to volunteer at Atlanta's Fellowship Bible Church as a weekly discipleship coach for eight high school seniors. He also began to enjoy a friendship with FBC's senior pastor, Dr. Crawford Loritts, discovering a mutual passion for ministry and social justice in Uganda. Realizing his own ongoing involvement with Africa could be a resource to benefit the local body, Tai began to look for opportunities to share his vision and experiences with individuals, Sunday school classes and pastoral staff.

From top: Tai and Pastor Loritts; Atlanta's Fellowship Bible Church

"The wonderful thing about Tai," Pastor Loritts observes, "is his open spirit and his attitude of wanting to serve. We know he's busy with his ministry, but when he's in town he's there regularly, engaged in service and worshipping. He's helped to bring the needs of Uganda to the forefront for our church. Tai is a representative of what our vision is for our church. We want to release people into the world outside our church to have a kingdom impact."

While Tai has found outlets for his gifts in the local church, the well-known musician realized that getting plugged in also meant learning to take a backseat sometimes and allowing others to serve him. For instance, he says, while he could be involved in leading worship on Sunday mornings if he chose, he recognized the need to step back and learn all over again how to participate as a worshipper among other worshippers.

"The model of all of Christianity," Tai says, "is the servant. Regardless of what your gift is. Whether it's music, the arts, or if it's swinging a hammer, we're living out the kingdom of the towel. We wash each other's feet. That's the model for all of us."

The remote descendent of Scottish horse-thieving ancestors, **Douglas Kaine McKelvey** has already bested the dubious achievements of his predecessors by penning four published books, crafting lyrics for more than 130 recorded songs and launching **lyrichead.com** and **myCCM.org/lyrichead**.

myCONCERTS—May 2007

Check out these tour dates for the artists prominently featured in this month's issue.

ANDY DAVIS—*no dates scheduled for May at press time*
andydavisonline.com

BARLOWGIRL—**5**-Athens, AL • **11**-Lake Forest, CA • **12**-Menifee, CA • **17**-Evansville, IN • **18**-Des Moines, IA • **19**-Muskegon, MI **20**-Nashville, TN • **25**-Canal Winchester, OH **26**-Edmonton, AB • **27**-Del Mar, CA
barlowgirl.com

BETWEEN THE TREES—**5**-East Rutherford, NJ • **11**-Peachtree City, GA • **12**-Orlando, FL
betweenthetrees.net

BUILDING 429—**12**-St. Louis, MO **19**-Madison, WI
building429.com

CANDI PEARSON-SHELTON—*no dates scheduled for May at press time*
candillion.com

CHASING VICTORY—**1**-Columbus, OH **2**-Akron, OH • **3**-Buffalo, NY **4**-Allston, MA • **5**-Lancaster, PA **8**-Columbus, GA
chasingvictory.com

DEAS VAIL—**2**-Springdale, AR • **3**-Little Rock, AR • **4**-Bloomington, IN • **6**-Ashland, MO
deasvail.com

DEREK WEBB—**1**-Greenville, SC **2**-Jacksonville, FL • **5**-Manchester, TN **12**-Orlando, FL
derekwebb.com

EVERYDAY SUNDAY—**4**-Knoxville, TN • **5**-Aberdeen, MD • **6**-Norfolk, VA • **12**-Otterville, IL • **17**-Duluth, MN • **19**-Naperville, IL • **20**-Paris, ON • **25**-Bangor, ME • **26**-Lewiston, ME **27**-Ocean City, NJ • **28**-Quakertown, PA
everydaysunday.com

FAMILY FORCE 5— **18**-Waterloo, ON **19**-Muskegon, MI
familyforce5.com

FLAME—*no dates scheduled for May at press time*
flame314.com

FLYLEAF— **5**-Dallas, TX • **6**-Austin, TX **8**-Little Rock, AR • **9**-Oklahoma City, OK **11**-Springfield, IL • **13**-Nashville, TN • **15**-Towson, MD • **16**-New York, NY • **18**-Boston, MA • **19**-Clifton Park, NY • **22**-Cleveland, OH **23**-Louisville, KY • **25**-Omaha, NE • **31**-Denver, CO
flyleafmusic.com

GROUP 1 CREW—**1**-Zachary, LA • **2**-Smyrna, GA • **3**-Bessemer, AL • **4**-Knoxville, TN • **5**-Trussville, AL/Annapolis, MD • **6**-Norfolk, VA **9**-Indianapolis, IN • **10**-Perrysburg, OH • **11**-Winchester, KY • **12**-Cincinnati, OH • **13**-Clarksville, TN • **17**-Duluth, MN • **18**-Minneapolis, MN • **19**-Naperville, IL • **20**-Chillicothe, MO • **21**-Park Hills, MO • **23**-Keyser, WV • **24**-Pitman, NJ • **25**-Bangor, ME **27**-Del Mar, CA • **30**-Diamond Bar, CA
group1crew.com

KRYSTAL MEYERS—**1**-Zachary, LA • **2**-Smyrna, GA • **3**-Bessemer, AL • **4**-Knoxville, TN • **5**-Annapolis, MD • **6**-Norfolk, VA • **9**-Indianapolis, IN • **10**-Perrysburg, OH • **11**-Winchester, KY • **12**-Cincinnati, OH • **13**-Clarksville, TN • **17**-Duluth, MN • **18**-Minneapolis, MN • **19**-Fredericktown, OH **20**-Chillicothe, MO • **21**-Park Hills, MO • **23**-Keyser, WV • **24**-Pitman, NJ • **25**-Bangor, ME **26**-Lewiston, ME • **27**-Ocean City, NJ • **28**-Quakertown, PA
krystalmeyers.com

MAGGIE MCCLURE—**5**-Norman, OK **11**-Norman, OK
maggiemcclure.com

MATT REDMAN—*no dates scheduled for May at press time*
mattredman.com

OCEANS ABOVE—*no dates scheduled for May at press time*
myspace.com/oceansaboveworship

RELIENT K—**3**-Cleveland, OH • **4**-Rochester, NY • **5**-Albany, NY • **6**-East Rutherford, NJ **7**-Washington D.C. • **8**-Baltimore, MD • **11**-Charlotte, NC • **12**-Jacksonville, FL • **14**-Orlando, FL • **15**-Ft. Lauderdale, FL • **16**-St. Petersburg, FL • **18**-Atlanta, GA
relientk.com

ROSIE THOMAS—*no dates scheduled for May at press time*
rosiethomas.com

RYAN WILKINS—**2**-Lakewood, OH • **25**-Berea, OH
ryanwilkins.com

THE CHARIOT—*no dates scheduled for May at press time*
thechariot.com

THE INNOCENCE MISSION—*no dates scheduled for May at press time*
theinnocencemission.com

THE WEDDING—*no dates scheduled for May at press time*
theweddingrock.com

THIRD DAY—**7**-London, England • **8**-Cardiff, Wales • **10**-Belfast, N. Ireland • **11**-Glasgow, Scotland • **19**-Norfolk, VA • **25**-Roseville, CA **26**-Portland, OR • **27**-Del Mar, CA
thirdday.com

THIS BEAUTIFUL REPUBLIC—**1**-Chambersburg, PA • **2**-Richmond, VA • **3**-Greensboro, NC • **5**-Athens, AL • **6**-Duluth, GA • **8**-Conway, AR • **9**-Houston, TX • **10**-Muskogee, OK • **11**-Dallas, TX • **12**-Garland, TX • **19**-Vacaville, CA • **20**-Redding, CA **21**-Modesto/Fresno, CA • **22**-Lancaster, CA **24**-Las Vegas, NV • **25**-So Cal/San Diego, CA **26**-Del Mar, CA • **27**-So Cal/San Diego, CA **31**-Phoenix, AZ
thisbeautifulrepublic.com

TIM HUGHES—*no dates scheduled for May at press time*
timhughesmusic.com

TOBYMAC—**5**-Staffordshire, Scotland• **7**-London, London and South East • **19**-Nashville, TN • **25**-Del Mar, CA • 26-Portland, OR • 27-Edmonton, AB
tobymac.com

URBAN D—**11**-Macon, GA • **12**-Tampa, FL **13**-Tampa, DE • **16**-Los Angeles, CA • **17-19**-Azuza Pacific, CA • **20**-Los Angeles, CA
myspace.com/urband813

VICKY BEECHING—**5**-Dallas, TX • **11**-Phoenix, AZ • **12**-Tucson, AZ • **20**-Murfreesboro, TN • **28**-Nacogdoches, TX
vickybeeching.com

All dates provided by artist websites; all dates subject to change. For the latest concert listings, check CCMmagazine.com's searchable tour database to find out when your favorite artists will play in a city near you.

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SIMPLY WORSHIP

CCM is honored to welcome LOUIE GIGLIO—founder of the Passion movement—as our new devotional columnist...

During my lifetime an explosion has happened with regard to worship in the church. Where once I had never heard an entire sermon on the subject, books on worship now abound. And though there was a day when worship almost exclusively referred to the eleven o'clock hour on Sunday, now what happens in that hour is subdivided into various forms, styles and genres depending on who you're talking to. We now talk about worship (narrowly defined in most cases as a musical expression) in terms of traditional, contemporary, charismatic, cutting edge, modern, ancient-future, post-modern and emerging, as though these descriptors really assist us in grasping the simplicity of what true Biblical worship is all about.

In an act of "confusion royal" we have deluded ourselves and muddied the waters beyond belief. As evidence, churches are fragmenting daily over worship preferences and styles. Yet, it's possible the true heart of worship escapes our pursuit.

So, if simplified (made more clear, not less demanding), what is true worship all about?

The answer, for me, lies etched on the face of a party crasher, who upon hearing Jesus was there, snuck her way into a dinner party being hosted by the religious high and mighty in her town. Inside, the men were reclining, facing one another with their shoeless feet exposed. Suddenly, "this woman" appeared, shedding tears that soaked the feet of the Savior and wiping them with her hair as she poured her most treasured perfume over His soles (Luke 7).

Once discovered, the indignant host rebuked not her, but Jesus, wondering how a "supposed prophet" would let a woman of her reputation (She is simply referred to as a sinful woman.) so much as lay a finger on him. Though the Pharisee didn't speak out loud, Jesus did, and replied to his questioning thoughts. Ooops.

His response? A story, of course, this one about two men who owed the Banker—one 50 bucks, the other 500. "When both debts were mercifully erased," Jesus pried, "Which will love him more?" "I suppose the one whom he forgave more," the host offered. Bingo! Simple logic, right? Yet here, in Jesus' next breath, I think we find the heart of worship. "For this reason I say to you, her sins, which are many, have been forgiven, for she loved much; but he who is forgiven little, loves little" (Luke 7:47, NAS).

Worship begins the instant we glimpse mercy, that moment we find ourselves in the most helpless of states, doomed by our own choices and standing in the shadow of certain and just judgment. In an instant, God could rightfully condemn us, yet surprisingly, kindness smiles and love overwhelms, opening a way for Mercy to appear and save the day. Our guilty eyes open to behold the Star Breather becoming the Sin Bearer, the Universe Maker becoming Mankind's Savior.

We don't know when or where this woman became convinced that Jesus was like no other, offering a second chance at a relationship with God. But like her, we all enter the Kingdom through the same door of matchless mercy. Instead of death, we received an overture of life, the innocent exchanged for the shameful in a stunning act that begs the question, "Who are those in Jesus' story who are *forgiven little*?" We all have escaped the worst possible scenario when, in the words of A. W. Tozer, "The rebels were turned into worshippers of the Living God."

The worship God deserves, and we were created to reflect, is not rooted in musical styles or the other trappings that dominate the present dialogue and fuel a rampant consumerism that devours the songs while leaving the singer unscathed. Rather, at the heart of worship is an awareness of our sin stain and a conviction that as our souls awaken to breathe again, every new breath has no other purpose than to exhale in sheer amazement at the wonder of it all.

"Therefore, I urge you brothers, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies [all of you and what you do] as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God—this is your spiritual act of worship" (Romans 12:1, NAS). In light of mercy, how can anyone *love little*, be unmoved, cease to dance?

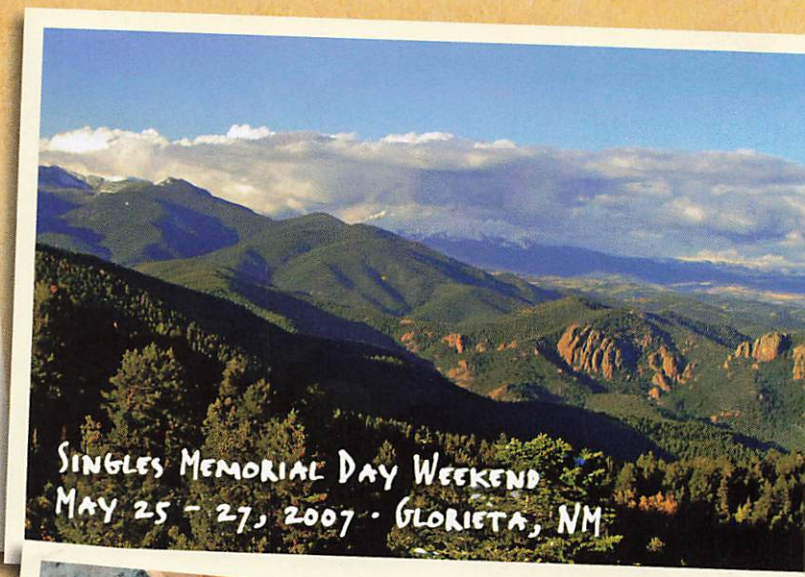
Sure, music and styles have their place, but the church will not emerge as an irresistible revolution led by melodies alone. The cross must unlock our hearts and unshackle our hands and feet. That's where worship begins, a torrent of unrehearsed gratitude poured on the feet of Him who is the greatest news of all.

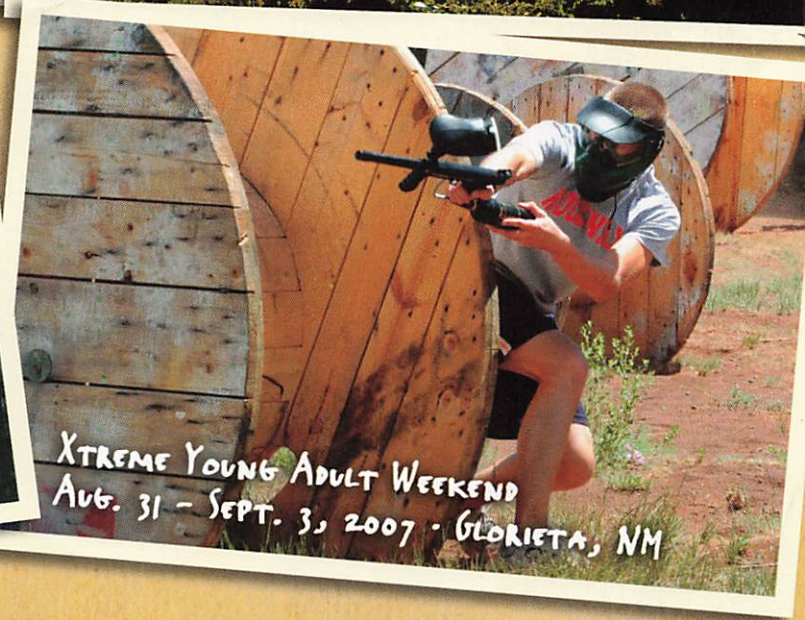
To see mercy is to offer everything. To offer everything is to truly worship.

> "OUR GUILTY EYES OPEN TO BEHOLD THE STAR BREATHER BECOMING THE SIN BEARER, THE UNIVERSE MAKER BECOMING MANKIND'S SAVIOR."

A passionate communicator and author, **Louie Giglio** is the founder of Passion Conferences, a collegiate movement calling people around the world to lives that spread God's fame. Giglio also heads sixsteps records, a label partner with EMI CMG, and home to artist-worshipers Chris Tomlin, David Crowder*Band, Matt Redman and Charlie Hall.
268generation.com

2007 SINGLES EVENTS





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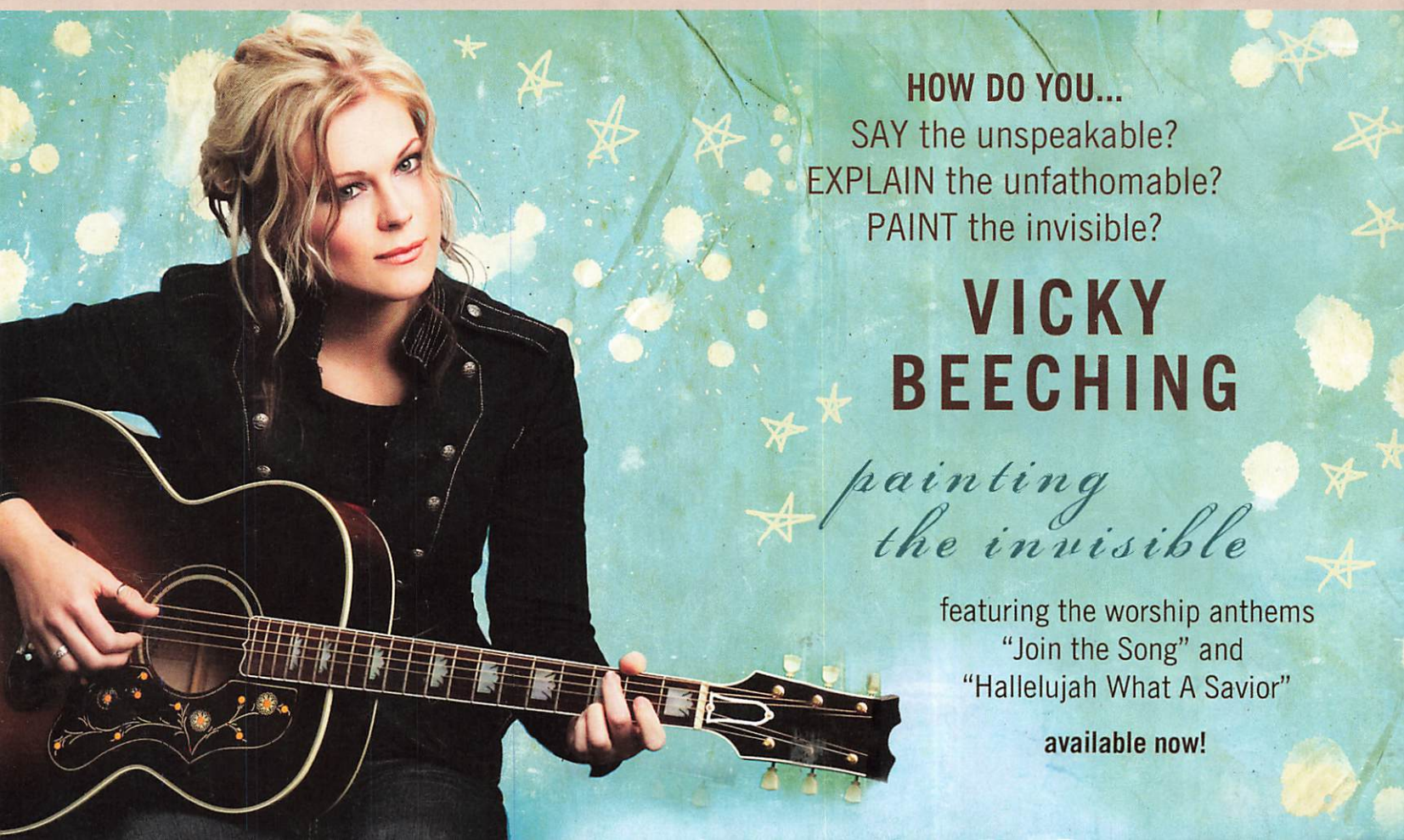
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